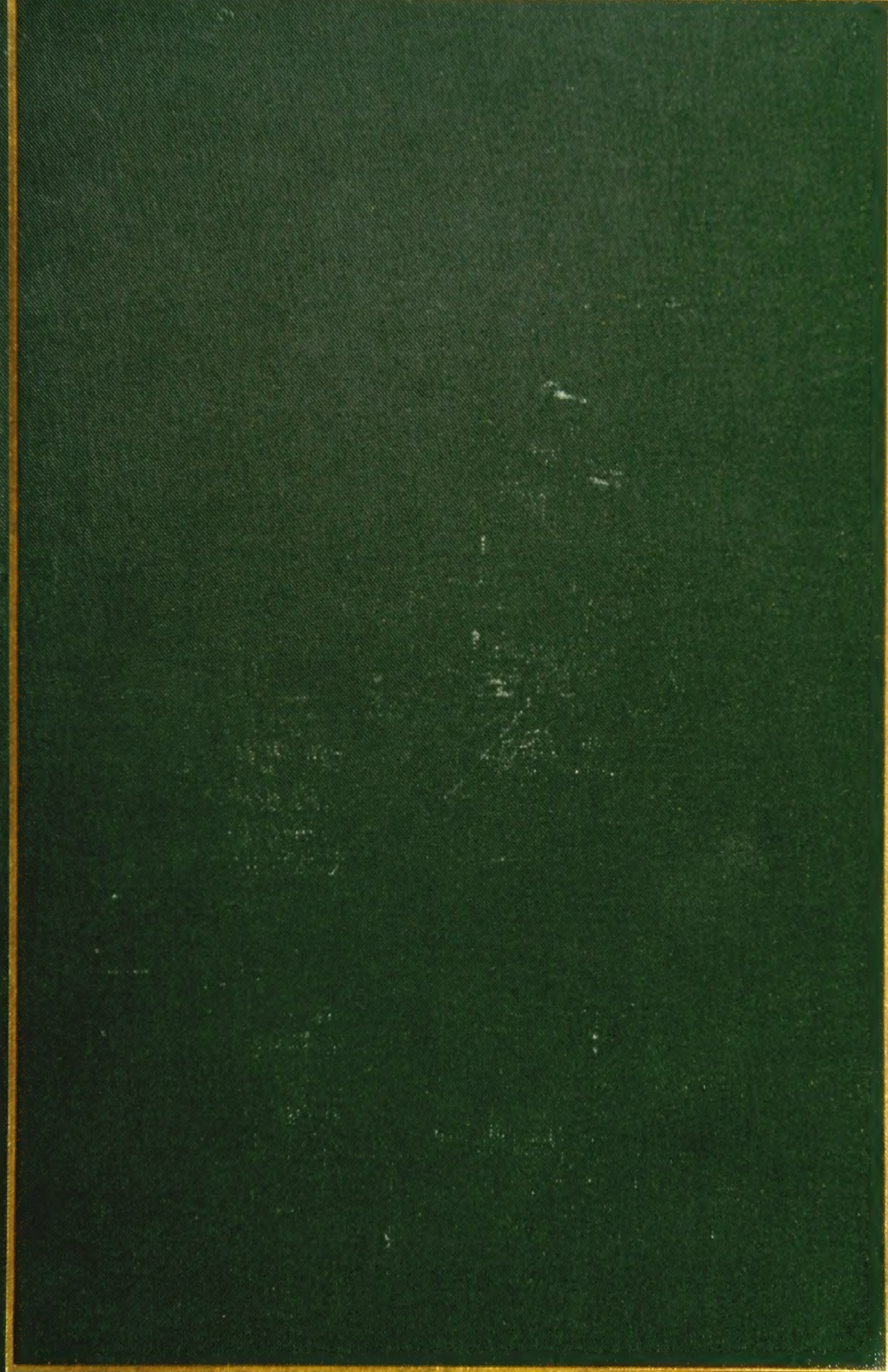




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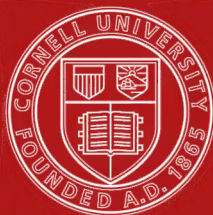
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ESSAYS

FROM THE

NORTH AMERICAN
REVIEW.

EDITED BY

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

NEW YORK :
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
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1879.

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PREFACE.

THE Essays collected in this volume may, without pretension, be truly said to represent the growth of native thought and scholarship in the United States from the close of the second war with Great Britain down to the close of the great Civil War. In few libraries, public or private, can complete sets of the "North American Review" be found, and the best thoughts and the freshest activity of two generations of conspicuous American writers have thus remained inaccessible to the great mass of the American reading public.

When the "North American Review" was projected, the object of its founders was to give public voice to a group of students, scholars, and thinkers in and around the university at Cambridge and the capital of Massachusetts, then not unaptly called the Athens of the New World; and the form of the "Review" was suggested by the amazing success which had attended the experiment so boldly ventured upon but a few years before by Jeffrey, Brougham, Horner, Sydney Smith,

and their associates at Edinburgh. The new periodical instantly drew to itself as contributors a concourse of rising American scholars, statesmen, poets, and jurists, whose names have long since become household words in this country, and among whom, as a glance at these pages will show, were numbered almost all the men who have since won a high place for American literature in the intellectual annals of the modern world.

It is to afford the present generation of readers an easy access to this most interesting chapter of our literary history that, with the kind permission of such of the authors as are still living, this volume is now given to the public.

A. T. R.

NEW YORK, *June, 1879.*

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*SIR WALTER SCOTT.**

THERE is no kind of writing which has truth and instruction for its main object so interesting and popular, on the whole, as biography. History, in its larger sense, has to deal with masses, which, while they divide the attention by the dazzling variety of objects, from their very generality, are scarcely capable of touching the heart. The great objects on which it is employed have little relation to the daily occupations with which the reader is most intimate. A nation, like a corporation, seems to have no soul; and its checkered vicissitudes may be contemplated rather with curiosity for the lessons they convey than with personal sympathy. How different are the feelings excited by the fortunes of an individual—one of the mighty mass, who in the page of history is swept along the current, unnoticed and unknown! Instead of a mere abstraction, at once we see a being like ourselves, “fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer” as we are. We place ourselves in his posi-

* 1. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*; by J. G. Lockhart. Five vols., 12mo. Boston: Otis, Broaders & Co. 1837.

2. *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* 16mo. London: James Fraser. 1837.

tion, and see the passing current of events with the same eyes. We become a party to all his little schemes, share in his triumphs, or mourn with him in the disappointment of defeat. His friends become our friends. We learn to take an interest in their characters, from their relation to him. As they pass away from the stage, one after another, and as the clouds of misfortune, perhaps, or of disease, settle around the evening of his own day, we feel the same sadness that steals over us on a retrospect of earlier and happier hours. And, when at last we have followed him to the tomb, we close the volume, and feel that we have turned over another chapter in the history of life.

On the same principles, probably, we are more moved by the exhibition of those characters whose days have been passed in the ordinary routine of domestic and social life, than by those most intimately connected with the great public events of their age. What, indeed, is the history of such men but that of the times? The life of Wellington, or of Bonaparte, is the story of the wars and revolutions of Europe. But that of Cowper, gliding away in the seclusion of rural solitude, reflects all those domestic joys, and, alas! more than the sorrows, which gather round every man's fireside and his heart. In this way the story of the humblest individual, faithfully recorded, becomes an object of lively interest. How much is that interest increased in the case of a man like Scott, who, from his own fireside, has sent forth a voice to cheer and delight millions of his fellow men; whose life, indeed, passed within the narrow circle of his own village, as it were, but who, nevertheless, has called up more shapes and phantasies within that magic circle, acted more extraordinary parts, and afforded more

marvels for the imagination to feed on, than can be furnished by the most nimble-footed, nimble-tongued traveler, from Marco Polo down to Mrs. Trollope, and that literary Sindbad, Captain Hall!

Fortunate as Sir Walter Scott was in his life, it is not the least of his good fortunes that he left the task of recording it to one so competent as Mr. Lockhart; who, to a familiarity with the person and habits of his illustrious subject, unites such entire sympathy with his pursuits, and such fine tact and discrimination in arranging the materials for their illustration. We have seen it objected, that the biographer has somewhat transcended his lawful limits, in occasionally exposing what a nice tenderness for the reputation of Scott should have led him to conceal. But, on reflection, we are not inclined to adopt these views. It is, indeed, difficult to prescribe any precise rule by which the biographer should be guided in exhibiting the peculiarities, and still more the defects, of his subject. He should, doubtless, be slow to draw from obscurity those matters which are of a strictly personal and private nature, particularly when they have no material bearing on the character of the individual. But whatever the latter has done, said, or written to others, can rarely be made to come within this rule. A swell of panegyric, where everything is in broad sunshine, without the relief of a shadow to contrast it, is out of nature, and must bring discredit on the whole. Nor is it much better, when a sort of twilight mystification is spread over a man's actions, until, as in the case of all biographies of Cowper previous to that of Southey, we are completely bewildered respecting the real motives of conduct. If ever there was a character above the necessity of any manage-

ment of this sort, it was Scott's; and we can not but think that the frank exposition of the minor blemishes which sully it, by securing the confidence of the reader in the general fidelity of the portraiture, and thus disposing him to receive, without distrust, those favorable statements in his history which might seem incredible, as they certainly are unprecedented, is, on the whole, advantageous to his reputation. As regards the moral effect on the reader, we may apply Scott's own argument for not always recompensing suffering virtue, at the close of his fictions, with temporal prosperity, that such an arrangement would convey no moral to the heart whatever, since a glance at the great picture of life would show that virtue is not always thus rewarded.

In regard to the literary execution of Mr. Lockhart's work, the public voice has long since pronounced on it. A prying criticism may, indeed, discern a few of those contraband epithets, and slipshod sentences, more excusable in *young* "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," where, indeed, they are thickly sown, than in the production of a grave Aristarch of British criticism. But this is small game, where every reader of the least taste and sensibility must find so much to applaud. It is enough to say that, in passing from the letters of Scott, with which the work is besprinkled, to the text of the biographer, we find none of those chilling transitions which occur on the like occasions in more bungling productions; as, for example, in that recent one, in which the unfortunate Hannah More is done to death by her friend Roberts. On the contrary, we are sensible only to a new variety of beauty in the style of composition. The correspondence is illumined by all that is needed to make it intelligible to a stranger, and selected with such

discernment as to produce the clearest impression of the character of its author. The mass of interesting details is conveyed in language richly colored with poetic sentiment, and at the same time without a tinge of that mysticism which, as Scott himself truly remarked, "will never do for a writer of fiction, no, nor of history, nor moral essays, nor sermons"; but which, nevertheless, finds more or less favor in our own community, at the present day, in each and all of these.

The second work which we have placed at the head of this article, and from which the last remark of Sir Walter's was borrowed, is a series of notices originally published in "*Fraser's Magazine*," but now collected, with considerable additions, into a separate volume. Its author, Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies, is a gentleman of the Scotch bar, favorably known by translations from the German. The work conveys a lively report of several scenes and events which, before the appearance of Lockhart's book, were of more interest and importance than they can now be, lost as they are in the flood of light which is poured on us from that source. In the absence of the sixth and last volume, however, Mr. Gillies may help us to a few particulars respecting the closing years of Sir Walter's life, that may have some novelty—we know not how much to be relied on—for the reader. In the present notice of a work so familiar to most persons, we shall confine ourselves to some of those circumstances which contributed to form, or have an obvious connection with, his literary character.

WALTER SCOTT was born at Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. The character of his father, a respectable member of that class of attorneys who in Scotland are called Writers to the

Signet, is best conveyed to the reader by saying that he sat for the portrait of Mr. Saunders Fairford, in "Redgauntlet." His mother was a woman of taste and imagination, and had an obvious influence in guiding those of her son. His ancestors, by both father's and mother's side, were of "gentle blood"—a position which, placed between the highest and the lower ranks in society, was extremely favorable, as affording facilities for communication with both. A lameness in his infancy—a most fortunate lameness for the world, if, as Scott says, it spoiled a soldier—and a delicate constitution made it expedient to try the efficacy of country air and diet; and he was placed under the roof of his paternal grandfather at Sandy-Knowe, a few miles distant from the capital. Here his days were passed in the open fields, "with no other fellowship," as he says, "than that of the sheep and lambs"; and here, in the lap of Nature—

"Meet nurse for a poetic child,"

his infant vision was greeted with those rude, romantic scenes which his own verses have since hallowed for the pilgrims from every clime. In the long evenings, his imagination, as he grew older, was warmed by traditionary legends of border heroism and adventure, repeated by the aged relative who had herself witnessed the last gleams of border chivalry. His memory was one of the first powers of his mind which exhibited an extraordinary development. One of the longest of these old ballads, in particular, stuck so close to it, and he repeated it with such stentorian vociferation, as to draw from the minister of a neighboring kirk the testy exclamation, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is."

On his removal to Edinburgh, in his eighth year, he was subjected to different influences. His worthy father was a severe martinet in all the forms of his profession, and it may be added, indeed, of his religion, which he contrived to make somewhat burdensome to his more volatile son. The tutor was still more strict in his religious sentiments, and the lightest literary *divertissement* in which either of them indulged was such as could be gleaned from the time-honored folios of Archbishop Spottiswoode, or worthy Robert Wodrow. Even here, however, Scott's young mind contrived to gather materials and impulses for future action. In his long arguments with Master Mitchell, he became steeped in the history of the Covenanters, and the persecuted Church of Scotland, while he was still more rooted in his own Jacobite notions, early instilled into his mind by the tales of his relatives of Sandy-Knowe, whose own family had been out in the "affair of forty-five." Amid the professional and polemical worthies of his father's library, Scott detected a copy of Shakespeare; and he relates with what *gout* he used to creep out of his bed, where he had been safely deposited for the night, and, by the light of the fire, *in puris naturalibus*, as it were, pore over the pages of the great magician, and study those mighty spells by which he gave to airy phantasies the forms and substance of humanity. Scott distinctly recollected the time and the spot where he first opened a volume of Percy's "Reliques of English Poetry"; a work which may have suggested to him the plan and the purpose of the "Border Minstrelsy." Every day's experience shows us how much more actively the business of education goes on out of school than in it. And Scott's history shows equally that genius, whatever obstacles may

be thrown in its way in one direction, will find room for its expansion in another; as the young tree sends forth its shoots most prolific in that quarter where the sunshine is permitted to fall on it.

At the High School, in which he was placed by his father at an early period, he seems not to have been particularly distinguished in the regular course of studies. His voracious appetite for books, however, of a certain cast, as romances, chivalrous tales, and worm-eaten chronicles scarcely less chivalrous, and his wonderful memory for such reading as struck his fancy, soon made him regarded by his fellows as a phenomenon of black-letter scholarship, which in process of time achieved for him the cognomen of that redoubtable schoolman, Duns Scotus. He now also gave evidence of his powers of creation as well as of acquisition. He became noted for his own stories, generally bordering on the marvelous, with a plentiful seasoning of knight-errantry, which suited his bold and chivalrous temper. "Slink over beside me, Jamie," he would whisper to his schoolfellow Ballantyne, "and I'll tell you a story." Jamie was, indeed, destined to sit beside him during the greater part of his life.

The same tastes and talents continued to display themselves more strongly with increasing years. Having beaten pretty thoroughly the ground of romantic and legendary lore, at least so far as the English libraries to which he had access would permit, he next endeavored, while at the University, to which he had been transferred from the High School, to pursue the same subject in the Continental languages. Many were the strolls which he took in the neighborhood, especially to Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crag, where,

perched on some almost inaccessible eyrie, he might be seen conning over his Ariosto or Cervantes, or some other bard of romance, with some favorite companion of his studies, or pouring into the ears of the latter his own boyish legends, glowing with

“ . . . achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry.”

A critical knowledge of these languages he seems not to have obtained ; and, even in the French, made but an indifferent figure in conversation. An accurate acquaintance with the pronunciation and prosody of a foreign tongue is undoubtedly a desirable accomplishment. But it is, after all, a mere accomplishment, subordinate to the great purposes for which a language is to be learned. Scott did not, as is too often the case, mistake the shell for the kernel. He looked on language only as the key to unlock the foreign stores of wisdom, the pearls of inestimable price, wherever found, with which to enrich his native literature.

After a brief residence at the University, he was regularly indented as an apprentice to his father, in 1786. One can hardly imagine a situation less congenial with the ardent, effervescing spirit of a poetic fancy ; fettered down to a daily routine of drudgery, scarcely above that of a mere scrivener. It proved a useful school of discipline to him, however. It formed early habits of method, punctuality, and laborious industry ; business habits, in short, most adverse to the poetic temperament, but indispensable to the accomplishment of the gigantic tasks which he afterward assumed. He has himself borne testimony to his general diligence in his new vocation, and tells us that on one occa-

sion he transcribed no less than a hundred and twenty folio pages at a sitting.

In the midst of these mechanical duties, however, he did not lose sight of the favorite objects of his study and meditation. He made frequent excursions into the Lowland as well as Highland districts, in search of traditionary relics. These pilgrimages he frequently performed on foot. His constitution, now become hardy by severe training, made him careless of exposure, and his frank and warm-hearted manners—eminently favorable to his purposes, by thawing at once any feelings of frosty reserve, which might have encountered a stranger—made him equally welcome at the staid and decorous manse, and at the rough but hospitable board of the peasant. Here was indeed the study of the future novelist; the very school in which to meditate those models of character and situation which he was afterward, long afterward, to transfer, in such living colors, to the canvas. “He was makin’ himsell a’ the time,” says one of his companions, “but he didna ken, maybe, what he was about, till years had past. At first he thought o’ little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun.” The honest Writer to the Signet does not seem to have thought it either so funny or so profitable; for on his son’s return from one of these *raids*, as he styled them, the old gentleman peevishly inquired how he had been living, so long. “Pretty much like the young ravens,” answered Walter; “I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in ‘The Vicar of Wakefield.’ If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage over the world.” “I doubt,” said the grave Clerk to the Signet, “I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better

than a *gangrel scrapegut*!" Perhaps even the revelation, could it have been made to him, of his son's future literary glory, would scarcely have satisfied the worthy father, who, probably, would have regarded a seat on the bench of the Court of Sessions as much higher glory. At all events, this was not far from the judgment of Dominie Mitchell, who, in his notice of his illustrious pupil, "sincerely regrets that Sir Walter's precious time was so much devoted to the *dulce* rather than the *utile* of composition, and that his great talents should have been wasted on such subjects"!

It is impossible to glance at Scott's early life without perceiving how powerfully all its circumstances, whether accidental or contrived, conspired to train him for the peculiar position he was destined to occupy in the world of letters. There never was a character in whose infant germ, as it were, the mature and fully developed lineaments might be more distinctly traced. What he was in his riper age, so he was in his boyhood. We discern the same tastes, the same peculiar talents, the same social temper and affections, and, in a great degree, the same habits—in their embryo state, of course, but distinctly marked—and his biographer has shown no little skill in enabling us to trace their gradual, progressive expansion, from the hour of his birth up to the full prime and maturity of manhood.

In 1792, Scott, whose original destination of a Writer had been changed to that of an Advocate—from his father's conviction, as it would seem, of the superiority of his talents to the former station—was admitted to the Scottish bar. Here he continued in assiduous attendance during the regular terms, but more noted for his stories in the Outer House, than his arguments in court. It may appear singular that

a person so gifted, both as a writer and as a *raconteur*, should have had no greater success in his profession. But the case is not uncommon. Indeed, experience shows that the most eminent writers have not made the most successful speakers. It is not more strange than that a good writer of novels should not excel as a dramatic author. Perhaps a consideration of the subject would lead us to refer the phenomena in both cases to the same principle. At all events, Scott was an exemplification of both; and we leave the solution to those who have more leisure and ingenuity to unravel the mystery.

Scott's leisure, in the mean time, was well employed in storing his mind with German romance, with whose wild fictions, intrenching on the grotesque, indeed, he found at that time more sympathy than in later life. In 1796 he first appeared before the public as a translator of Bürger's well-known ballads, thrown off by him at a heat, and which found favor with the few into whose hands they passed. He subsequently adventured in Monk Lewis's crazy bark—"Tales of Wonder"—which soon went to pieces, leaving, however, among its surviving fragments the scattered contributions of Scott.

At last, in 1802, he gave to the world his first two volumes of the "Border Minstrelsy," printed by his old school-fellow, Ballantyne, and which, by the beauty of the typography, as well as literary execution, made a sort of epoch in Scottish literary history. There was no work of Scott's after-life which showed the result of so much preliminary labor. Before ten years old, he had collected several volumes of ballads and traditions, and we have seen how diligently he pursued the same vocation in later years. The

publication was admitted to be far more faithful, as well as more skillfully collated, than its prototype, the "*Reliques*" of Bishop Percy; while his notes contained a mass of antiquarian information relative to border life, conveyed in a style of beauty unprecedented in topics of this kind, and enlivened with a higher interest than poetic fiction. Percy's "*Reliques*" had prepared the way for the kind reception of the "*Minstrelsy*," by the general relish—notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's protest—it had created for the simple pictures of a pastoral and heroic time. Burns had since familiarized the English ear with the Doric melodies of his native land; and now a greater than Burns appeared, whose first production, by a singular chance, came into the world in the very year in which the Ayrshire minstrel was withdrawn from it, as if Nature had intended that the chain of poetic inspiration should not be broken. The delight of the public was further augmented on the appearance of the third volume of the "*Minstrelsy*," containing various imitations of the old ballad, which displayed all the rich fashion of the antique, purified from the mold and rust by which the beauties of such weather-beaten trophies are defaced.

The first edition of the "*Minstrelsy*," consisting of eight hundred copies, went off, as Lockhart tells us, in less than a year; and the poet, on the publication of a second, received five hundred pounds sterling from Longman—an enormous price for such a commodity, but the best bargain, probably, that the bookseller ever made, as the subsequent sale has since extended to twenty thousand copies.

Scott was not in great haste to follow up his success. It was three years later before he took the field as an independent author, in a poem which at once placed him among

the great original writers of his country. The "Lay of the Last Minstrel," a complete expansion of the ancient ballad into an epic form, was published in 1805. It was opening a new creation in the realm of fancy. It seemed as if the author had transfused into his page the strong delineations of the Homeric pencil, the rude but generous gallantry of a primitive period, softened by the more airy and magical inventions of Italian romance,* and conveyed in tones of natural melody such as had not been heard since the strains of Burns. The book speedily found that unprecedented circulation which all his subsequent compositions attained. Other writers had addressed themselves to a more peculiar and limited feeling—to a narrower and generally a more select audience. But Scott was found to combine all the qualities of interest for every order. He drew from the pure springs which gush forth in every heart. His narrative chained every reader's attention by the stirring variety of its incidents, while the fine touches of sentiment with which it abounded, like wild flowers, springing up spontaneously around, were full of freshness and beauty, that made one wonder that others should not have stooped to gather them before.

The success of the "Lay" determined the course of its author's future life. Notwithstanding his punctual attention

* "Mettendo lo Turpin, lo metto anch' io,"

says Ariosto, playfully, when he tells a particularly tough story.

"I can not tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me,"

says the author of the "Lay," on a similar occasion. The resemblance might be traced much further than mere forms of expression, to the Italian, who, like

" . . . the Ariosto of the North,
Sung ladye-love, and war, romance, and knightly worth."

to his profession, his utmost profits for any one year of the ten he had been in practice had not exceeded two hundred and thirty pounds; and of late they had sensibly declined. Latterly, indeed, he had coquetted somewhat too openly with the Muse for his professional reputation. Themis has always been found a stern and jealous mistress, chary of dispensing her golden favors to those who are seduced into a flirtation with her more volatile sister.

Scott, however, soon found himself in a situation that made him independent of her favors. His income from the two offices to which he was promoted, of Sheriff of Selkirk and Clerk of the Court of Sessions, was so ample, combined with what fell to him by inheritance and marriage, that he was left at liberty freely to consult his own tastes. Amid the seductions of poetry, however, he never shrunk from his burdensome professional duties; and he submitted to all their drudgery with unflinching constancy, when the labors of his pen made the emoluments almost beneath consideration. He never relished the idea of being divorced from active life by the solitary occupations of a recluse. And his official functions, however severely they taxed his time, may be said to have, in some degree, compensated him by the new scenes of life which they were constantly disclosing—the very materials of those fictions on which his fame and his fortune were to be built.

Scott's situation was, on the whole, eminently propitious to literary pursuits. He was married, and passed the better portion of the year in the country, where the quiet pleasures of his fireside circle and a keen relish for rural sports relieved his mind and invigorated both health and spirits. In early life, it seems, he had been crossed in love; and, like

Dante and Byron, to whom in this respect he is often compared, he has more than once, according to his biographer, shadowed forth in his verses the object of his unfortunate passion. He does not appear to have taken it so seriously, however, nor to have shown the morbid sensibility in relation to it discovered by both Byron and Dante, the former of whom perhaps found his *cara sposa* so much too cold, as the latter certainly did his too hot, for his own temperament, as to seek relief from the present in the poetical visions of the past.

Scott's next great poem was his "Marmion," transcending, in the judgment of many, all his other epics, and containing, in the judgment of all, passages of poetic fire which he never equaled; but which, nevertheless, was greeted on its entrance into the world by a *critique* in the leading journal of the day of the most caustic and unfriendly temper. The journal was the "Edinburgh," to which he had been a frequent contributor, and the reviewer was his intimate friend Jeffrey. The unkindest cut in the article was the imputation of a neglect of Scottish character and feeling. "There is scarcely one trait of true Scottish nationality or patriotism introduced into the whole poem; and Mr. Scott's only expression of admiration for the beautiful country to which he belongs is put, if we rightly remember, into the mouth of one of his southern favorites." This of Walter Scott! The critic had some misgivings, it would seem, as to the propriety of the part he was playing, or at least as to its effect on the mind of his friend, since he sent a copy of the yet unpublished article to the latter on the day he was engaged to dine with him, with a request for a speedy answer. Scott testified no visible marks of vexation, although

his wife was not so discreet, telling Jeffrey rather bluntly she hoped Constable would pay him well for abusing his friend. The gossips of the day in Edinburgh exaggerated the story into her actually turning the reviewer out of doors. He well deserved it.

The affair, however, led to important consequences. Scott was not slow after this in finding the political principles of the "Edinburgh" so repugnant to his own (and they certainly were as opposite as the poles) that he first dropped the journal, and next labored with unwearied diligence to organize another, whose main purpose should be to counteract the heresies of the former. This was the origin of the London "Quarterly," more imputable to Scott's exertions than to those of any, indeed all, other persons. The result has been, doubtless, highly serviceable to the interests of both morals and letters. Not that the new review was conducted with more fairness or, in this sense, *principle* than its antagonist. A remark of Scott's own, in a letter to Ellis, shows with how much principle. "I have run up an attempt on 'The Curse of Kehama' for the 'Quarterly.' It affords cruel openings to the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the 'Edinburgh Review.' I would have made a very different hand of it, indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*." But, although the fate of the individual was thus, to a certain extent, a matter of caprice or rather prejudgment in the critic, yet the great abstract questions in morals, politics, and literature, by being discussed on both sides, were presented in a fuller and of course fairer light to the public. Another beneficial result to letters was—and we shall gain credit, at least, for candor in confessing it—that it broke down somewhat of that

divinity which hedged in the despotic *we* of the reviewer, so long as no rival arose to contest the scepter. The claims to infallibility, so long and slavishly acquiesced in, fell to the ground when thus stoutly asserted by conflicting parties. It was pretty clear that the same thing could not be all black and all white at the same time. In short, it was the old story of pope and antipope; and the public began to find out that there might be hopes for the salvation of an author, though damned by the literary popedom. Time, indeed, by reversing many of its decisions, must at length have shown the same thing.

But to return. Scott showed how nearly he had been touched to the quick by two other acts not so discreet. These were the establishment of an Annual Register, and of the great publishing house of the Ballantynes, in which he became a silent partner. The last step involved him in grievous embarrassments, and stimulated him to exertions which required "a frame of adamant and soul of fire" to have endured. At the same time, we find him overwhelmed with poetical, biographical, historical, and critical compositions, together with editorial labors of appalling magnitude. In this multiplication of himself in a thousand forms, we see him always the same, vigorous and effective. "Poetry," he says, in one of his letters, "is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful to those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow." It might be regretted, however, that he should have wasted powers fitted for so much higher culture on the coarse products of a kitchen-garden, which might have been safely trusted to inferior hands.

In 1811 Scott gave to the world his exquisite poem, "The Lady of the Lake." One of his fair friends had remonstrated with him on thus risking again the laurel he had already won. He replied, with characteristic and indeed prophetic spirit: "If I fail, *I will write prose all my life.* But if I succeed—

‘Up wi’ the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather an a’!’”

In his eulogy on Byron, Scott remarks: "There has been no reposeing under the shade of his laurels, no living upon the resource of past reputation; none of that *coddling* and petty precaution which little authors call 'taking care of their fame.' Byron let his fame take care of itself." Scott could not have more accurately described his own character.

"The Lady of the Lake" was welcomed with an enthusiasm surpassing that which attended any other of his poems. It seemed like the sweet breathings of his native pibroch, stealing over glen and mountain, and calling up all the delicious associations of rural solitude, which beautifully contrasted with the din of battle and the shrill cry of the war-trumpet that stirred the soul in every page of his "Marmion." The publication of this work carried his fame as a poet to its most brilliant height. Its popularity may be inferred from the fact stated by Lockhart, that the post-horse duty rose to an extraordinary degree in Scotland, from the eagerness of travelers to visit the localities of the poem. A more substantial evidence was afforded in its amazing circulation, and consequently its profits. The press could scarcely keep pace with the public demand,

and no less than fifty thousand copies of it have been sold since the date of its appearance. The successful author realized more than two thousand guineas from his production. Milton received ten pounds for the two editions which he lived to see of his "Paradise Lost." The Ayrshire bard had sighed for "a lass wi' a tocher." Scott had now found one in the Muse, such as no Scottish nor any other poet had ever found before.

While the poetical fame of Scott was thus at its zenith, a new star rose above the horizon, whose eccentric course and dazzling radiance completely bewildered the spectator. In 1812 "Childe Harold" appeared, and the attention seemed to be now called, for the first time, from the outward form of man and visible nature to the secret depths of the soul. The darkest recesses of human passion were laid open, and the note of sorrow was prolonged in tones of agonized sensibility, the more touching as coming from one who was placed on those dazzling heights of rank and fashion which, to the vulgar eye at least, seem to lie in unclouded sunshine. Those of the present generation who have heard only the same key thrummed *ad nauseam* by the feeble imitators of his lordship, can form no idea of the effect produced when the chords were first swept by the master's fingers. It was found impossible for the ear once attuned to strains of such compass and ravishing harmony, to return with the same relish to purer, it might be, but tamer melody; and the sweet voice of the Scottish minstrel lost much of its power to charm, let him charm never so wisely. While "Rokeby" was in preparation, bets were laid on the rival candidates by the wits of the day. The sale of this poem, though great, showed a sensible decline in the popularity of its author.

This became still more evident on the publication of "The Lord of the Isles"; and Scott admitted the conviction with his characteristic spirit and good nature. "'Well, James,' he said to his printer, 'I have given you a week; what are people saying about "The Lord of the Isles"?' I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. 'Come,' he said, 'speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But, I see how it is, the result is given in one word—*disappointment*.' My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event. At length he said, with perfect cheerfulness: 'Well, well, James, so be it; but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must stick to something else.' " This *something else* was a mine he had already hit upon, of invention and substantial wealth, such as Thomas the Rhymer, or Michael Scott, or any other adept in the black art, had never dreamed of.

Everybody knows the story of the composition of "Waverley"—the most interesting story in the annals of letters—and how, some ten years after its commencement, it was fished out of some old lumber in an attic, and completed in a few weeks for the press, in 1814. Its appearance marks a more distinct epoch in English literature than that of the poetry of its author. All previous attempts in the same school of fiction—a school of English growth—had been cramped by the limited information or talent of the writers. Smollett had produced his spirited sea-pieces, and Fielding his warm sketches of country life, both of them mixed up

with so much Billingsgate as required a strong flavor of wit to make them tolerable. Richardson had covered acres of canvas with his faithful family pictures. Mrs. Radcliffe had dipped up to the elbows in horrors; while Miss Burney's fashionable gossip and Miss Edgeworth's Hogarth drawings of the prose—not the poetry—of life and character had each and all found favor in their respective ways. But a work now appeared in which the author swept over the whole range of character with entire freedom as well as fidelity, ennobling the whole by high historic associations, and in a style varying with his theme, but whose pure and classic flow was tinged with just so much of poetic coloring as suited the purposes of romance. It was Shakespeare in prose.

The work was published, as we know, anonymously. Mr. Gillies states, however, that while in the press fragments of it were communicated to "Mr. Mackenzie, Dr. Brown, Mrs. Hamilton, and other *savants* or *savantes*, whose dicta on the merits of a new novel were considered unimpeachable." By their approbation "a strong body of friends was formed, and the curiosity of the public prepared the way for its reception." This may explain the rapidity with which the anonymous publication rose into a degree of favor which, though not less surely, perhaps, it might have been more slow in achieving. The author jealously preserved his *incognito*, and, in order to heighten the mystification, flung off almost simultaneously a variety of works, in prose and poetry, any one of which might have been the labor of months. The public for a moment was at fault. There seemed to be six Richmonds in the field. The world, therefore, was reduced to the dilemma of either supposing

that half a dozen different hands could work in precisely the same style, or that one could do the work of half a dozen. With time, however, the veil wore thinner and thinner, until at length, and long before the ingenious argument of Mr. Adolphus, there was scarcely a critic so purblind as not to discern behind it the features of the mighty Minstrel.

Constable had offered seven hundred pounds for the new novel. "It was," says Mr. Lockhart, "ten times as much as Miss Edgeworth ever realized from any of her popular Irish tales." Scott declined the offer, which had been a good one for the bookseller had he made it as many thousand. But it passed the art of necromancy to divine this.

Scott, once entered on this new career, followed it up with an energy unrivaled in the history of literature. The public mind was not suffered to cool for a moment, before its attention was called to another miracle of creation from the same hand. Even illness that would have broken the spirit of most men, as it prostrated the physical energies of Scott, opposed no impediment to the march of composition. When he could no longer write, he could dictate; and in this way, amid the agonies of a racking disease, he composed "The Bride of Lammermoor," the "Legend of Montrose," and a great part of "Ivanhoe." The first, indeed, is darkened with those deep shadows that might seem thrown over it by the somber condition of its author. But what shall we say of the imperturbable dry humor of the gallant Captain Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, or of the gorgeous revelries of Ivanhoe—

"Such sights as youthful poets dream,
On summer eves by haunted stream"—

what shall we say of such brilliant day-dreams for a bed of torture? Never before had the spirit triumphed over such agonies of the flesh. "The best way," said Scott, in one of his talks with Gillies, "is, *if possible*, to triumph over disease by setting it at defiance, somewhat on the same principle as one avoids being stung by boldly grasping a nettle."

The prose fictions were addressed to a much larger audience than the poems could be. They had attractions for every age and every class. The profits, of course, were commensurate. Arithmetic has never been so severely taxed as in the computation of Scott's productions, and the proceeds resulting from them. In one year he received (or, more properly, was credited with—for it is somewhat doubtful how much he actually received) fifteen thousand pounds for his novels, comprehending the first edition and the copyright. The discovery of this rich mine furnished its fortunate proprietor with the means of gratifying the fondest, and indeed most chimerical, desires. He had always coveted the situation of a lord of acres—a Scottish laird; where his passion for planting might find scope in the creation of whole forests—for everything with him was on a magnificent scale—and where he might indulge the kindly feelings of his nature in his benevolent offices to a numerous and dependent tenantry. The few acres of the original purchase now swelled into hundreds, and, for aught we know, thousands; for one tract alone we find incidentally noticed as costing thirty thousand pounds. "It rounds off the property so handsomely," he says in one of his letters. There was always a corner to "round off." The mansion, in the mean time, from a simple cottage *orné*, was amplified into the dimensions almost, as well as the *bizarre*

proportions, of some old feudal castle. The furniture and decorations were of the costliest kind; the wainscots of oak and cedar, the floors tessellated with marbles, or woods of different dyes, the ceilings fretted and carved with all the delicate tracery of a Gothic abbey, the storied windows blazoned with the richly-colored insignia of heraldry, the walls garnished with time-honored trophies, or curious specimens of art, or volumes sumptuously bound—in short, with all that luxury could demand or ingenuity devise; while a copious reservoir of gas supplied every corner of the mansion with such fountains of light as must have puzzled the genius of the *lamp* to provide for the less fortunate Aladdin.

Scott's exchequer must have been seriously taxed in another form, by the crowds of visitors whom he entertained under his hospitable roof. There was scarcely a person of note, or indeed not of note, who visited that country without paying his respects to the Lion of Scotland. Lockhart reckons up a full sixth of the British peerage who had been there within his recollection; and Captain Hall, in his amusing "Notes," remarks that it was not unusual for a dozen or more coach-loads to find their way into his grounds in the course of the day, most of whom found or forced an entrance into the mansion. Such was the heavy tax paid by his celebrity, and, we may add, his good nature. For, if the one had been a whit less than the other, he could never have tolerated such a nuisance.

The cost of his correspondence gives one no light idea of the demands made on his time, as well as purse, in another form. His postage for letters, independently of franks, by which a large portion of it was covered, amounted to a hundred and fifty pounds, it seems, in the course of the

year. In this, indeed, should be included ten pounds for a pair of unfortunate "Cherokee Lovers," sent all the way from our own happy land, in order to be godfathered by Sir Walter on the London boards. Perhaps the smart-money he had to pay on this interesting occasion had its influence in mixing up rather more acid than was natural to him in his judgments of our countrymen. At all events the Yankees find little favor on the few occasions on which he has glanced at them in his correspondence. "I am not at all surprised," he says, in a letter to Miss Edgeworth, apparently chiming in with her own tune—"I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honorable love of their country, and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men when they have once got benches will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for traveling." On another occasion he does, indeed, admit having met with in the course of his life "four or five well-lettered Americans ardent in pursuit of knowledge, and free from the igno-

rance and forward presumption which distinguish many of their countrymen." This seems hard measure; but perhaps we should find it difficult among the many who have visited this country to recollect as great a number of Englishmen—and Scotchmen to boot—entitled to a higher degree of commendation. It can hardly be that the well-informed and well-bred men of both countries make a point of staying at home; so we suppose we must look for the solution of the matter in the existence of some disagreeable ingredient, common to the characters of both nations, sprouting as they do from a common stock, which remains latent at home, and is never fully disclosed till they get into a foreign climate. But as this problem seems pregnant with philosophical, physiological, and, for aught we know, psychological matter, we have not courage for it here, but recommend the solution to Miss Martineau, to whom it will afford a very good title for a new chapter in her next edition. The strictures we have quoted, however, to speak more seriously, are worth attending to, coming as they do from a shrewd observer, and one whose judgments, though here somewhat colored, no doubt, by political prejudice, are in the main distinguished by a sound and liberal philanthropy. But, were he ten times an enemy, we would say, "*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*"

With the splendid picture of the baronial residence at Abbotsford, Mr. Lockhart closes all that at this present writing we have received of his delightful work in this country. And in the last sentence the melancholy sound of "the muffled drum" gives ominous warning of what we are to expect in the sixth and concluding volume. In the dearth of more authentic information, we will piece out our

sketch with a few facts gleaned from the somewhat meager bill of fare—meager by comparison with the rich banquet of the true *Amphitryon*—afforded by the “*Recollections*” of Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies.

The unbounded popularity of the *Waverley* novels led to still more extravagant anticipations on the part both of the publishers and author. Some hints of a falling off, though but slightly, in the public favor, were unheeded by both parties; though, to say truth, the exact state of things was never disclosed to Scott, it being Ballantyne’s notion that it would prove a damper, and that the true course was “to press on more sail as the wind lulled.” In these sanguine calculations not only enormous sums, or, to speak correctly, *bills*, were given for what had been written, but the author’s drafts, to the amount of many thousand pounds, were accepted by Constable in favor of works, the very embryos of which lay not only unformed but unimagined, in the womb of time. In return for this singular accommodation, Scott was induced to endorse the drafts of his publisher; and in this way an amount of liabilities was incurred which, considering the character of the house, and its transactions, it is altogether inexplicable that a person in the independent position of Sir Walter Scott should have subjected himself to for a moment. He seems to have had entire confidence in the stability of the firm; a confidence to which it seems, from Mr. Gillies’s account, not to have been entitled from the first moment of his connection with it. The great reputation of the house, however, the success and magnitude of some of its transactions, especially the publication of these novels, gave it a large credit, which enabled it to go forward with a great show of prosperity in

ordinary times, and veiled the tottering state of things probably from Constable's own eyes. It is but the tale of yesterday. The case of Constable & Co. is, unhappily, a very familiar one to us. But, when the hurricane of 1825 came on, it swept away all those buildings that were not founded on a rock; and those of Messrs. Constable, among others, soon became literally mere *castles in the air*. In plain English, the firm stopped payment. The assets were very trifling in comparison with the debts. And Sir Walter Scott was found on their paper to the frightful amount of one hundred thousand pounds.

His conduct on the occasion was precisely what was to have been anticipated from one who had declared on a similar though much less appalling conjuncture, "I am always ready to make any sacrifices to do justice to my engagements, and would rather sell anything or everything than be less than a true man to the world." He put up his house and furniture in town at auction; delivered over his personal effects at Abbotsford, his plate, books, furniture, etc., to be held in trust for his creditors (the estate itself had been recently secured to his son, on occasion of his marriage), and bound himself to discharge a certain amount annually of the liabilities of the insolvent firm. He then, with his characteristic energy, set about the performance of his Herculean task. He took lodgings in a third-rate house in St. David's Street; saw but little company; abridged the hours usually devoted to his meals and his family; gave up his ordinary exercise; and, in short, adopted the severe habits of a regular Grub Street stipendiary.

"For many years," he said to Mr. Gillies, "I have been accustomed to hard work, because I found it a pleasure;

now, with all due respect for Falstaff's principle, 'nothing on compulsion,' I certainly will not shrink from work because it has become necessary."

One of his first tasks was his "Life of Bonaparte," achieved in the space of thirteen months. For this he received fourteen thousand pounds, about eleven hundred per month; not a bad bargain, either, as it proved, for the publishers. The first two volumes of the nine which make up the English edition were a *rifacimento* of what he had before compiled for the "Annual Register." With every allowance for the inaccuracies and the excessive expansion incident to such a flashing rapidity of execution, the work, taking into view the broad range of its topics, its shrewd and sagacious reflections, and the free, bold, and picturesque coloring of its narration—and, above all, considering *the brief time in which it was written*—is indisputably one of the most remarkable monuments of genius and industry—perhaps the most remarkable ever recorded.

Scott's celebrity made everything that fell from him, however trifling—the dew-drops from the lion's mane—of value. But none of the many adventures he embarked in, or rather set afloat, proved so profitable as the republication of his novels, with his notes and illustrations. As he felt his own strength in the increasing success of his labors, he appears to have relaxed somewhat from them, and to have again resumed somewhat of his ancient habits, and in a mitigated degree his ancient hospitality. But still his exertions were too severe, and pressed heavily on the springs of health, already deprived by age of their former elasticity and vigor. At length, in 1831, he was overtaken by one of those terrible shocks of paralysis which seem to have

been constitutional in his family, but which, with more precaution and under happier auspices, might doubtless have been postponed if not wholly averted. At this time he had, in the short space of little more than five years, by his sacrifices and efforts, discharged about two thirds of the debt for which he was responsible; an astounding result, wholly unparalleled in the history of letters! There is something inexpressibly painful in this spectacle of a generous heart thus courageously contending with fortune, bearing up against the tide with unconquerable spirit, and finally overwhelmed by it just within reach of shore.

The rest of his story is one of humiliation and sorrow. He was induced to make a voyage to the Continent, to try the effect of a more genial climate. Under the sunny sky of Italy he seemed to gather new strength for a while. But his eye fell with indifference on the venerable monuments which in better days would have kindled all his enthusiasm. The invalid sighed for his own home at Abbotsford. The heat of the weather and the fatigue of rapid travel brought on another shock which reduced him to a state of deplorable imbecility. In this condition he returned to his own halls, where the sight of early friends and of the beautiful scenery—the creation, as it were, of his own hands—seemed to impart a gleam of melancholy satisfaction, which soon, however, sunk into insensibility. To his present situation might well be applied the exquisite verses which he indited on another melancholy occasion:

“ Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o’er the hills of Ettrick’s shore.

“With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed’s silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.

“The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree—
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?”

Providence in its mercy did not suffer the shattered frame long to outlive the glorious spirit which had informed it. He breathed his last on September 21, 1832. His remains were deposited, as he had always desired, in the hoary abbey of Dryburgh; and the pilgrim from many a distant clime shall repair to the consecrated spot so long as the reverence for exalted genius and worth shall survive in the human heart.

This sketch, brief as we could make it, of the literary history of Sir Walter Scott, has extended so far as to leave but little space for—what Lockhart’s volumes afford ample materials for—his personal character. Take it for all and all, it is not too much to say that this character is probably the most remarkable on record. There is no man that we now recall of historical celebrity who combined in so eminent a degree the highest qualities of the moral, the intellectual, and the physical. He united in his own character what hitherto had been found incompatible. Though a poet and living in an ideal world, he was an exact, methodical man of business; though achieving with the most wonderful fertility of genius, he was patient and laborious; a mousing antiquarian, yet with the most active interest in

the present and whatever was going on around him ; with a strong turn for a roving life and military adventure, he was yet chained to his desk more hours at some periods of his life than a monkish recluse ; a man with a heart as capacious as his head ; a Tory, brim full of Jacobitism, yet full of sympathy and unaffected familiarity with all classes, even the humblest ; a successful author, without pedantry and without conceit ; one, indeed, at the head of the republic of letters, and yet with a lower estimate of letters, as compared with other intellectual pursuits, than was ever hazarded before.

The first quality of his character, or rather that which forms the basis of it, as of all great characters, was his energy. We see it in his early youth triumphing over the impediments of nature, and in spite of lameness making him conspicuous in every sort of athletic exercise—clambering up dizzy precipices, wading through treacherous fords, and performing feats of pedestrianism that make one's joints ache to read of. As he advanced in life we see the same force of purpose turned to higher objects. A striking example occurs in his organization of the journals and the publishing-house in opposition to Constable. In what Herculean drudgery did not this latter business, in which he undertook to supply matter for the nimble press of Ballantyne, involve him ! While, in addition to his own concerns, he had to drag along by his solitary momentum a score of heavier undertakings, that led Lockhart to compare him to a steam-engine with a train of coal-wagons hitched on to it. "Yes," said Scott, laughing, and making a crashing cut with his axe (for they were felling larches), "and there was a cursed lot of dung-carts, too."

We see the same powerful energies triumphing over disease at a later period, when, indeed, nothing but a resolution to get the better of it enabled him to do so. "Be assured," he remarked to Mr. Gillies, "that if pain could have prevented my application to literary labor, not a page of 'Ivanhoe' would have been written. Now, if I had given way to mere feelings and ceased to work, it is a question whether the disorder might not have taken a deeper root and become incurable." But the most extraordinary instance of this trait is the readiness with which he assumed, and the spirit with which he carried through till his mental strength broke down under it, the gigantic task imposed on him by the failure of Constable.

It mattered little, indeed, what the nature of the task was, whether it were organizing an opposition to a political faction, or a troop of cavalry to resist invasion, or a medley of wild Highlanders and Edinburgh cockneys to make up a royal puppet-show—a loyal celebration—for "his Most Sacred Majesty"—he was the master-spirit that gave the cue to the whole *dramatis personæ*. This potent impulse showed itself in the thoroughness with which he prescribed not merely the general orders but the execution of the minutest details in his own person. Thus all around him was the creation, as it were, of his individual exertion. His lands waved with forests planted with his own hands, and in process of time cleared by his own hands. He did not lay the stones in mortar exactly for his whimsical castle, but he seems to have superintended the operation from the foundation to the battlements. The antique relics, the curious works of art, the hangings and furniture even with which his halls were decorated, were specially contrived or

selected by him; and, to read his letters at this time to his friend Terry, one might fancy himself perusing the correspondence of an upholsterer, so exact and technical is he in his instructions. We say this not in disparagement of his great qualities. It is only the more extraordinary, for, while he stooped to such trifles, he was equally thorough in matters of the highest moment. It was a trait of character.

Another quality which, like the last, seems to have given the tone to his character, was his social or benevolent feelings. His heart was an unfailing fountain which, not merely the distresses, but the joys, of his fellow creatures made to flow like water. In early life, and possibly sometimes in later, high spirits and a vigorous constitution led him occasionally to carry his social propensities into convivial excess. But he never was in danger of the habitual excess to which a vulgar mind—and sometimes, alas! one more finely tuned—abandons itself. Indeed, with all his conviviality, it was not the sensual relish, but the social, which acted on him. He was neither *gourmet* nor *gourmand*; but his social meetings were endeared to him by the free interchange of kindly feelings with his friends. La Bruyère says (and it is odd he should have found it out in Louis XIV.'s court), "The heart has more to do than the head with the pleasures, or rather promoting the pleasures, of society" ("Un homme est d'un meilleur commerce dans la société par le cœur que par l'esprit"). If report, the report of travelers, be true, we Americans, at least the New-Englanders, are too much perplexed with the cares and crosses of life, to afford many genuine specimens of this *bonhomie*. However this may be, we all, doubtless, know some such character, whose shining face, the index of a

cordial heart radiant with beneficent pleasure, diffuses its own exhilarating glow wherever it appears. Rarely, indeed, is this precious quality found united with the most exalted intellect. Whether it be that Nature, chary of her gifts, does not care to shower too many of them on one head; or, that the public admiration has led the man of intellect to set too high a value on himself, or at least his own pursuits, to take an interest in the inferior concerns of others; or, that the fear of compromising his dignity puts him "on points" with those who approach him; or, whether, in truth, the very magnitude of his own reputation throws a freezing shadow over us little people in his neighborhood; whatever be the cause, it is too true that the highest powers of mind are very often deficient in the only one which can make the rest of much worth in society—the power of pleasing.

Scott was not one of these little great. His was not one of those dark-lantern visages which concentrate all their light on their own path and are black as midnight to all about them. He had a ready sympathy, a word of contagious kindness or cordial greeting for all. His manners, too, were of a kind to dispel the icy reserve and awe which his great name was calculated to inspire. His frank address was a sort of *open sesame* to every heart. He did not deal in sneers, the poisoned weapons which come not from the head, as the man who launches them is apt to think, but from an acid heart, or perhaps an acid stomach, a very common laboratory of such small artillery. Neither did Scott amuse the company with parliamentary harangues or metaphysical disquisitions. His conversation was of the narrative kind, not formal, but as casually suggested by some

passing circumstance or topic, and thrown in by way of illustration. He did not repeat himself, however, but continued to give his anecdotes such variations, by rigging them out in a new "cocked hat and walking-cane," as he called it, that they never tired like the thrice-told tale of a chronic *raconteur*. He allowed others, too, to take their turn, and thought with the Dean of St. Patrick's:

"Carve to all but just enough,
Let them neither starve nor stuff;
And that you may have your due,
Let your neighbors carve for you."

He relished a good joke, from whatever quarter it came, and was not over-dainty in his manner of testifying his satisfaction. "In the full tide of mirth he did indeed laugh the heart's laugh," says Mr. Adolphus. "Give me an honest laughter," said Scott himself, on another occasion, when a buckram man of fashion had been paying him a visit at Abbotsford. His manners, free from affectation or artifice of any sort, exhibited the spontaneous movements of a kind disposition, subject to those rules of good-breeding which Nature herself might have dictated. In this way he answered his own purposes admirably, as a painter of character, by putting every man in good humor with himself; in the same manner as a cunning portrait-painter amuses his sitters with such store of fun and anecdote as may throw them off their guard, and call out the happiest expressions of their countenances.

Scott, in his wide range of friends and companions, does not seem to have been over-fastidious. In the instance of John Ballantyne it has exposed him to some censure. In-

deed, a more worthless fellow never hung on the skirts of a great man; for he did not take the trouble to throw a decent veil over the grossest excesses. But then he had been the schoolboy friend of Scott; had grown up with him in a sort of dependence—a relation which begets a kindly feeling in the party that confers the benefits at least. How strong it was in him may be inferred from his remark at his funeral. “I feel,” said Scott, mournfully, as the solemnity was concluded—“I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth.” It must be admitted, however, that his intimacy with little Rigdumfunnidos, whatever apology it may find in Scott’s heart, was not very creditable to his taste.

But the benevolent principle showed itself not merely in words, but in the more substantial form of actions. How many are the cases recorded of indigent merit which he drew from obscurity, and almost warmed into life by his own generous and most delicate patronage. Such were the cases, among others, of Leyden, Weber, Hogg. How often and how cheerfully did he supply such literary contributions as were solicited by his friends—and they taxed him pretty liberally—amid all the pressure of business, and at the height of his fame when his hours were golden hours indeed to him! In the more vulgar and easier forms of charity he did not stint his hand, though, instead of direct assistance, he preferred to enable others to assist themselves; in this way fortifying their good habits, and relieving them from the sense of personal degradation.

But the place where his benevolent impulses found their proper theatre for expansion was his own home; surrounded by a happy family, and dispensing all the hospitalities of a

great feudal proprietor. "There are many good things in life," he says, in one of his letters, "whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offense (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist), are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings in which we are at once happy ourselves and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us." Every page of the work almost shows us how intimately he blended himself with the pleasures and the pursuits of his own family, watched over the education of his children, shared in their rides, their rambles, and sports, losing no opportunity of kindling in their young minds a love of virtue and honorable principles of action. He delighted, too, to collect his tenantry around him, multiplying holidays, when young and old might come together under his roof-tree, when the jolly punch was liberally dispensed by himself and his wife among the elder people, and the *Hogmanay* cakes and pennies were distributed among the young ones; while his own children mingled in the endless reels and hornpipes on the earthen floor, and the *laird* himself, mixing in the groups of merry faces, had his "private joke for every old wife or 'gausie carle,' his arch compliment for the ear of every bonnie lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees." "Sir Walter," said one of his old retainers, "speaks to every man as if he were his blood-relation." No wonder that they should have returned this feeling with something warmer than blood-relations usually do. Mr. Gillies tells an anecdote of the "Ettrick Shepherd," showing how deep a root such feelings, notwithstanding his rather odd way of expressing them,

sometimes had taken in his honest nature. "Mr. James Ballantyne walking home with him one evening from Scott's, where, by the by, Hogg had gone uninvited, happened to observe: 'I do not at all like this illness of Scott's. I have often seen him look jaded of late, and am afraid it is serious.' 'Haud your tongue, or I'll gar you measure your length on the pavement!' replied Hogg. 'You fause, down-hearted loon, that you are; ye daur to speak as if Scott were on his deathbed! It can not be, it *must* not be! I will not suffer you to speak that gait.' The sentiment was like that of Uncle Toby at the bedside of Le Fevre; and, at these words, the Shepherd's voice became suppressed with emotion."

But Scott's sympathies were not confined to his species; and, if he treated them like blood-relations, he treated his brute followers like personal friends. Every one remembers old Maida, and faithful Camp, the "dear old friend," whose loss cost him a dinner. Mr. Gillies tells us that he went into his study on one occasion, when he was winding off his "Vision of Don Roderick." "'Look here,' said the poet, 'I have just begun to copy over the rhymes that you heard to-day, and applauded so much. Return to supper, if you can; only don't be late, as you perceive we keep early hours, and Wallace will not suffer me to rest after six in the morning.—Come, good dog, and help the poet.' At this hint, Wallace seated himself upright on a chair next his master, who offered him a newspaper, which he directly seized, looking very wise, and holding it firmly and contentedly in his mouth. Scott looked at him with great satisfaction, for he was excessively fond of dogs. 'Very well,' said he, '*now* we shall get on.' And so I left them abruptly, knowing that my

‘absence would be the best company.’” This fellowship, indeed, extended much further than to his canine followers, of which, including hounds, terriers, mastiffs, and mongrels, he had certainly a goodly assortment. We find, also, Grimalkin installed in a responsible post in the library, and out of doors pet hens, pet donkeys, and—tell it not in Judea—a pet pig!

Scott’s sensibilities, though easily moved, and widely diffused, were warm and sincere. None shared more cordially in the troubles of his friends; but on all such occasions, with a true manly feeling, he thought less of mere sympathy than of the most effectual way for mitigating their sorrows. After a touching allusion, in one of his epistles, to his dear friend Erskine’s death, he concludes, “I must turn to, and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters.” In another passage, which may remind one of some of the exquisite touches in Jeremy Taylor, he indulges in the following beautiful strain of philosophy: “The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy. So it must be with us—

‘When apace life’s day draws near the gloamin’—

and yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave, where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so; otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us.” His well-disciplined heart seems to have confessed the influence of this philosophy, in his most ordinary relations. “I

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the organ of veneration. He regarded with reverence everything connected with antiquity. His establishment was on the feudal scale; his house was fashioned more after the feudal ages than his own; and even in the ultimate distribution of his fortune, although the circumstance of having made it himself relieved him from any legal necessity of contravening the suggestions of natural justice, he showed such attachment to the old aristocratic usage as to settle nearly the whole of it on his eldest son.

The influence of this poetic sentiment is discernible in his most trifling acts, in his tastes, his love of the arts, his social habits. His museum, house, and grounds were adorned with relics, curious not so much from their workmanship as their historic associations. It was the ancient fountain from Edinburgh, the Tolbooth lintels, the blunderbuss and spleughan of Rob Roy, the drinking-cup of Prince Charlie, or the like. It was the same in the arts. The tunes he loved were not the refined and complex melodies of Italy, but the simple notes of his native minstrelsy, from the bagpipe of John of Skye, or from the harp of his own lovely and accomplished daughter. So also in painting. It was not the masterly designs of the great Flemish and Italian schools that adorned his walls, but some portrait of Claverhouse, or of Queen Mary, or of "glorious old John." In architecture, we see the same spirit in the singular "romance of stone and lime," which may be said to have been his own device, down to the minutest details of its finishing. We see it again in the joyous celebrations of his feudal tenantry, the good old festivals, the Hogmanay, the Kirn, etc., long fallen into desuetude, when the old Highland piper sounded the same wild pibroch that had so often summoned the clans together, for

war or for wassail, among the fastnesses of the mountains. To the same source, in fine, may be traced the feelings of superstition which seemed to hover round Scott's mind like some "strange, mysterious dream," giving a romantic coloring to his conversation and his writings, but rarely if ever influencing his actions. It was a poetic sentiment.

Scott was a Tory to the backbone. Had he come into the world half a century sooner he would, no doubt, have made a figure under the banner of the Pretender. He was at no great pains to disguise his political creed; witness his jolly drinking-song on the acquittal of Lord Melville. This was verse; but his prose is not much more qualified. "As for Whiggery in general," he says, in one of his letters, "I can only say that, as no man can be said to be utterly over-set until his rump has been higher than his head, so I cannot read in history of any free state which has been brought to slavery until the rascal and uninstructed populace had had their short hour of anarchical government, which naturally leads to the stern repose of military despotism. . . . With these convictions, I am very jealous of Whiggery, under all modifications; and I must say my acquaintance with the total want of principle in some of its warmest professors does not tend to recommend it." With all this, however, his Toryism was not, practically, of that sort which blunts a man's sensibilities for those who are not of the same porcelain clay with himself. No man, Whig or Radical, ever had less of this pretension, or treated his inferiors with greater kindness, and indeed familiarity; a circumstance noticed by every visitor at his hospitable mansion, who saw him strolling round his grounds, taking his pinch of snuff out of the mull of some "gray-haired old hedger," or leaning on

honest Tom Purdie's shoulder, and taking sweet counsel as to the right method of thinning a plantation. But, with all this familiarity, no man was better served by his domestics. It was the service of love; the only service that power can not command, and money can not buy.

Akin to the feelings of which we have been speaking was the truly chivalrous sense of honor which stamped his whole conduct. We do not mean that Hotspur honor which is roused only by the drum and fife—though he says of himself, "I like the sound of a drum as well as Uncle Toby ever did"—but that honor which is deep-seated in the heart of every true gentleman, shrinking with sensitive delicacy from the least stain or imputation of a stain on his faith. "If we lose everything else," writes he on a trying occasion to a friend who was not so nice in this particular, "we will at least keep our honor unblemished." It reminds one of the pithy epistle of a kindred chivalrous spirit, Francis I., to his mother from the unlucky field of Pavia: "*Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur.*" Scott's latter years furnished a noble commentary on the sincerity of his manly principles.

Little is said directly of his religious sentiments in the biography. They seem to have harmonized well with his political. He was a member of the English Church, a stanch champion of established forms, and a sturdy enemy to everything that savored of the sharp twang of Puritanism. On this ground, indeed, the youthful Sampson used to wrestle manfully with worthy Dominie Mitchell, who, no doubt, furnished many a screed of doctrine for the Rev. Peter Poundtext, Master Nehemiah Holdenough, and other lights of the Covenant. Scott was no friend to cant under any form. But, whatever were his speculative opinions, in

practice his heart overflowed with that charity which is the life-spring of our religion. And, whenever he takes occasion to allude to the subject directly, he testifies a deep reverence for the truths of revelation as well as for its divine Original.

Whatever estimate be formed of Scott's moral qualities, his intellectual were of a kind which well entitled him to the epithet conferred on Lope de Vega, "*monstruo de naturaleza*," "a miracle of nature." His mind, indeed, did not seem to be subjected to the same laws which control the rest of his species. His memory, as is usual, was the first of his powers fully developed. While an urchin at school he could repeat whole cantos, he says, of Ossian and of Spenser. In riper years we are constantly meeting with similar feats of his achievement. Thus on one occasion he repeated the whole of a poem in some penny magazine incidentally alluded to, which he had not seen since he was a schoolboy. On another, when the Ettrick Shepherd was trying ineffectually to fish up from his own recollections some scraps of a ballad he had himself manufactured years before, Scott called to him, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I will tell it to you word for word"; and he accordingly did so. But it is needless to multiply examples of feats so startling as to look almost like the tricks of a conjurer.

What is most extraordinary is, that while he acquired with such facility that the bare perusal or the repetition of a thing once to him was sufficient, he yet retained it with the greatest pertinacity. Other men's memories are so much jostled in the rough and tumble of life that most of the facts get sifted out nearly as fast as they are put in; so that we are in the same pickle with those unlucky daughters of Da-

naus, of schoolboy memory, obliged to spend the greater part of the time in replenishing. But Scott's memory seemed to be hermetically sealed, suffering nothing once fairly in to leak out again. This was of immense service to him when he took up the business of authorship, as his whole multifarious stock of facts, whether from books or observation, became in truth his stock in trade, ready furnished to his hands. This may explain in part, though it is not less marvelous, the cause of his rapid execution of works, often replete with rare and curious information. The labor, the preparation, had been already completed. His whole life had been a business of preparation. When he ventured, as in the case of "Rokeby" and of "Quentin Durward," on ground with which he had not been familiar, we see how industriously he set about new acquisitions.

In most of the prodigies of memory which we have ever known, the overgrowth of that faculty seems to have been attained at the expense of all the others. But in Scott the directly opposite power of the imagination—the inventive power—was equally strongly developed, and at the same early age. For we find him renowned for story-craft while at school. How many a delightful fiction, indeed, warm with the flush of ingenuous youth, did he not throw away on the ears of thoughtless childhood which, had they been duly registered, might now have amused children of a larger growth! We have seen Scott's genius in its prime and its decay. The frolic graces of childhood are alone wanting.

The facility with which he threw his ideas into language was also remarked very early. One of his first ballads, and a long one, was dashed off at the dinner-table. His "Lay "

was written at the rate of a canto a week. "Waverley," or rather the last two volumes of it, cost the evenings of a summer month. Who that has ever read the account can forget the movements of that mysterious hand as descried by the two students from the window of a neighboring attic, throwing off sheet after sheet with untiring rapidity of the pages destined to immortality? Scott speaks pleasantly enough of this marvelous facility in a letter to his friend Morritt: "When once I set my pen to the paper it will walk fast enough. I am sometimes tempted to leave it alone, and see whether it will not write as well without the assistance of my head as with it. A hopeful prospect for the reader."

As to the time and place of composition, he appears to have been nearly indifferent. He possessed entire power of abstraction, and it mattered little whether he were nailed to his clerk's desk, under the drowsy eloquence of some long-winded barrister, or dashing his horse into the surf on Portobello sands, or rattling in a post-chaise, or amid the hum of guests in his overflowing halls at Abbotsford—it mattered not, the same well-adjusted little packet, "nicely corded and sealed," was sure to be ready at the regular time for the Edinburgh mail. His own account of his composition, to a friend who asked when he found time for it, is striking enough. "Oh," said Scott, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a doze in the plantations, and, while Tom marks out a dike or a drain, as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs

in some other world." Never, indeed, did this sort of simmering produce such a splendid bill of fare.

The quality of the material under such circumstances is, in truth, the great miracle of the whole. The execution of so much work as a mere feat of penmanship would undoubtedly be very extraordinary; but, as a mere scrivener's miracle, would be hardly worth recording. It is a sort of miracle that is every day performing under our own eyes, as it were, by Messrs. James, Bulwer & Co., who, in all the various staples of "comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral," etc., etc., supply their own market and ours too with all that can be wanted. In Spain and in Italy, too, we may find abundance of *improvvisatori* and *improvvisatrici*, who perform miracles of the same sort in verse, too, in languages whose vowel terminations make it very easy for the thoughts to tumble into rhyme without any malice prepense. Governor Raffles, in his account of Java, tells us of a splendid avenue of trees before his house, which in the course of a year shot up to the height of forty feet. But who shall compare the brief, transitory splendors of a fungous vegetation with the mighty monarch of the forest, sending his roots deep into the heart of the earth, and his branches, amid storm and sunshine, to the heavens? And is not the latter the true emblem of Scott? For who can doubt that his prose creations, at least, will gather strength with time, living on through succeeding generations, even when the language in which they are written, like those of Greece and Rome, shall cease to be a living language?

The only writer deserving in these respects to be named with Scott is Lope de Vega, who in his own day held as high a rank in the republic of letters as our great contem-

porary. The beautiful dramas which he threw off for the entertainment of the capital, and whose success drove Cervantes from the stage, outstripped the abilities of an amanuensis to copy. His intimate friend Montalvan, one of the most popular and prolific authors of the time, tells us that he undertook with Lope once to supply the theatre with a comedy—in verse, and in three acts, as the Spanish dramas usually were—at a very short notice. In order to get through his half as soon as his partner, he rose by two in the morning, and at eleven had completed it; an extraordinary feat, certainly, since a play extended to between thirty and forty pages, of a hundred lines each. Walking into the garden he found his brother poet pruning an orange-tree. “Well, how do you get on?” said Montalvan. “Very well,” answered Lope. “I rose betimes, at five; and, after I had got through, ate my breakfast; since which I have written a letter of fifty triplets, and watered the whole of the garden, which has tired me a good deal.”

But a little arithmetic will best show the comparative fertility of Scott and Lope de Vega. It is so germane to the present matter that we shall make no apology for transcribing here some computations from our last July number; and, as few of our readers, we suspect, have the airtight memory of Sir Walter, we doubt not that enough of it has escaped them by this time to excuse us from equipping it with one of those “cocked hats and walking-sticks” with which he furbished up an old story:

“It is impossible to state the results of Lope de Vega’s labors in any form that will not powerfully strike the imagination. Thus, he has left twenty-one million three hundred thousand verses in print, besides a mass of manuscript. He furnished the theatre, according

to the statement of his intimate friend Montalvan, with eighteen hundred regular plays and four hundred *autos* or religious dramas—all acted. He composed, according to his own statement, more than one hundred comedies in the almost incredible space of twenty-four hours each; and a comedy averaged between two and three thousand verses, great part of them rhymed and interspersed with sonnets, and other more difficult forms of versification. He lived seventy-two years; and supposing him to have employed fifty of that period in composition, although he filled a variety of engrossing vocations during that time, he must have averaged a play a week, to say nothing of twenty-one volumes, quarto, of miscellaneous works, including five epics, written in his leisure moments, and all now in print!

“The only achievements we can recall in literary history bearing any resemblance to, though falling far short of this, are those of our illustrious contemporary, Sir Walter Scott. The complete edition of his works, recently advertised by Murray, with the addition of two volumes, of which Murray has not the copyright, probably contains ninety volumes, small octavo. [To these should further be added a large supply of matter for the “*Edinburgh Annual Register*,” as well as other anonymous contributions.] Of these, forty-eight volumes of novels and twenty-one of history and biography were produced between 1814 and 1831, or in seventeen years. These would give an average of four volumes a year, or one for every three months during the whole of that period, to which must be added twenty-one volumes of poetry and prose previously published. The mere mechanical execution of so much work, both in his case and Lope de Vega’s, would seem to be scarce possible in the limits assigned. Scott, too, was as variously occupied in other ways as his Spanish rival; and probably, from the social hospitality of his life, spent a much larger portion of his time in no literary occupation at all.”

Of all the wonderful dramatic creations of Lope de

Vega's genius what now remains? Two or three plays only keep possession of the stage, and few, very few, are still read with pleasure in the closet. They have never been collected into a uniform edition, and are now met with in scattered sheets only on the shelves of some mousing bookseller, or collected in miscellaneous parcels in the libraries of the curious.

Scott, with all his facility of execution, had none of that pitiable affectation sometimes found in men of genius, who think that the possession of this quality may dispense with regular, methodical habits of study. He was most economical of time. He did not, like Voltaire, speak of it as "a terrible thing that so much time should be wasted in talking." He was too little of a pedant and far too benevolent not to feel that there are other objects worth living for than mere literary fame. But he grudged the waste of time on merely frivolous and heartless objects. "As for dressing when we are quite alone," he remarked one day to Mr. Gillies, whom he had taken home with him to a family dinner, "it is out of the question. Life is not long enough for such fiddle-faddle." In the early part of his life he worked late at night. But subsequently from a conviction of the superior healthiness of early rising, as well as the desire to secure, at all hazards, a portion of the day for literary labor, he rose at five the year round; no small effort, as any one will admit who has seen the pain and difficulty which a regular bird of night finds in reconciling his eyes to daylight. He was scrupulously exact, moreover, in the distribution of his hours. In one of his letters to his friend Terry, the player, replete, as usual, with advice that seems to flow equally from the head and the heart, he says, in reference

to the practice of *dawdling* away one's time: "A habit of the mind it is which is very apt to beset men of intellect and talent, especially when their time is not regularly filled up, but left to their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion. I must love a man so well to whom I offer such a word of advice that I will not apologize for it, but expect to hear you are become *as regular as a Dutch clock—hours, quarters, minutes, all marked and appropriated.*" With the same emphasis he inculcates the like habits on his son. If any man might dispense with them it was surely Scott. But he knew that without them the greatest powers of mind will run to waste and water but the desert.

Some of the literary opinions of Scott are singular, considering, too, the position he occupied in the world of letters. "I promise you," he says in an epistle to an old friend, "my oaks will outlast my laurels; and I pique myself more on my compositions for manure than on any other compositions to which I was ever accessory." This may seem *badinage*. But he repeatedly, both in writing and conversation, places literature, as a profession, below other intellectual professions, and especially the military. The Duke of Wellington, the representative of the last, seems to have drawn from him a very extraordinary degree of deference, which, we can not but think, smacks a little of that strong relish for gunpowder which he avows in himself.

It is not very easy to see on what this low estimate of literature rested. As a profession, it has too little in common with more active ones to afford much ground for running a parallel. The soldier has to do with externals; and

his contests and triumphs are over matter, in its various forms, whether of man or material nature. The poet deals with the bodiless forms of air, of fancy lighter than air. His business is contemplative ; the other's is active, and depends for its success on strong moral energy and presence of mind. He must, indeed, have genius of the highest order to effect his own combinations, anticipate the movements of his enemy, and dart with eagle eye on his vulnerable point. But who shall say that this practical genius, if we may so term it, is to rank higher in the scale than the creative power of the poet, the spark from the mind of Divinity itself ?

The orator might seem to afford better ground for comparison, since, though his theatre of action is abroad, he may be said to work with much the same tools as the writer. Yet, how much of his success depends on qualities other than intellectual ! " Action," said the father of eloquence, " action, action, are the three most essential things to an orator." How much, indeed, depends on the look, the gesture, the magical tones of voice, modulated to the passions he has stirred ; and how much on the contagious sympathies of the audience itself, which drown everything like criticism in the overwhelming tide of emotion ! If any one would know how much, let him, after patiently standing

" till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,"

read the same speech in the columns of a morning newspaper, or in the well-concocted report of the orator himself. The productions of the writer are subjected to a fiercer ordeal. He has no excited sympathies of numbers to hurry

his readers along over his blunders. He is scanned in the calm silence of the closet. Every flower of fancy seems here to wilt under the rude breath of criticism; every link in the chain of argument is subjected to the touch of prying scrutiny, and if there be the least flaw in it it is sure to be detected. There is no tribunal so stern as the secret tribunal of a man's own closet, far removed from all the sympathetic impulses of humanity. Surely there is no form in which *intellect* can be exhibited to the world so completely stripped of all adventitious aids as the form of written composition. But, says the practical man, let us estimate things by their utility. "You talk of the poems of Homer," said a mathematician, "but after all what do they *prove*?" A question which involves an answer somewhat too voluminous for the tail of an article. But, if the poems of Homer were, as Heeren asserts, the principal bond which held the Grecian states together, and gave them a national feeling, they "prove" more than all the arithmeticians of Greece—and there were many cunning ones in it—ever did. The results of military skill are indeed obvious. The soldier by a single victory enlarges the limits of an empire; he may do more—he may achieve the liberties of a nation, or roll back the tide of barbarism ready to overwhelm them. Wellington was placed in such a position, and nobly did he do his work—or, rather, he was placed at the head of such a gigantic moral and physical apparatus as enabled him to do it. With his own unassisted strength of course he could have done nothing. But it is on his own solitary resources that the great writer is to rely. And yet who shall say that the triumphs of Wellington have been greater than those of Scott—whose works are familiar as household words to every

fireside in his own land, from the castle to the cottage ; have crossed oceans and deserts, and, with healing on their wings, found their way to the remotest regions ; have helped to form the character, until his own mind may be said to be incorporated into those of hundreds of thousands of his fellow-men ? Who is there that has not, at some time or other, felt the heaviness of his heart lightened, his pains mitigated, and his bright moments of life made still brighter by the magical touches of his genius ? And shall we speak of his victories as less real, less serviceable to humanity, less truly glorious, than those of the greatest captain of his day ? The triumphs of the warrior are bounded by the narrow theatre of his own age. But those of a Scott or a Shakespeare will be renewed, with greater and greater luster, in ages yet unborn, when the victorious chieftain shall be forgotten, or shall live only in the song of the minstrel and the page of the chronicler.

But, after all, this sort of parallel is not very gracious nor very philosophical ; and, to say truth, is somewhat foolish. We have been drawn into it by the not random, but very deliberate, and in our poor judgment very disparaging estimate by Scott of his own vocation ; and, as we have taken the trouble to write it, our readers will excuse us from blotting it out. There is too little ground for the respective parties to stand on for a parallel. As to the pedantic *cui bono* standard, it is impossible to tell the final issues of a single act ; how can we then hope to, those of a course of action ? As for the *honor* of different vocations, there never was a truer sentence than the stale one of Pope—stale now because it is so true—

“ Act well your part, there all the honor lies.”

And it is the just boast of our own country that in no civil-

ized nation is the force of this philanthropic maxim so nobly illustrated as in ours—thanks to our glorious institutions.

A great cause, probably, of Scott's low estimate of letters, was the facility with which he wrote himself. What costs us little we are apt to prize little. If diamonds were as common as pebbles, and gold dust as any other, who would stoop to gather them? It was the prostitution of his muse, by the by, for this same gold dust which brought a sharp rebuke on the poet from Lord Byron, in his "English Bards"—

"For this we spurn Apollo's venal son";

a coarse cut, and the imputation about as true as most satire—that is, not true at all. This was indited in his lordship's earlier days, when he most chivalrously disclaimed all purpose of bartering his rhymes for gold. He lived long enough, however, to weigh his literary wares in as nice a money-balance as any more vulgar manufacturer ever did. And, in truth, it would be ridiculous if the produce of the brain should not bring its price, in this form as well as any other; there is little danger, we imagine, of finding too much gold in the bowels of Parnassus.

Scott took a more sensible view of things. In a letter to Ellis, written soon after the publication of the "Minstrelsy," he observes: "People may say this and that of the pleasure of fame, or of profit, as a motive of writing; I think the only pleasure is in the actual exertion and research, and I would no more write upon any other terms than I would hunt merely to dine upon hare-soup. At the same time, if credit and profit came unlooked for I would no more quarrel with them than with the soup." Even this declaration was somewhat more magnanimous than was warranted by his subse-

quent conduct. The truth is, he soon found out, especially after the Waverley vein had opened, that he had hit on a gold mine. The prodigious returns he got gave the whole thing the aspect of a speculation. Every new work was an adventure; and the proceeds naturally suggested the indulgence of the most extravagant schemes of expense, which, in their turn, stimulated him to fresh efforts. In this way the "profits" became, whatever they might have been once, a principal incentive to, as they were the recompense of, exertion. His productions were cash articles, and were estimated by him more on the Hudibrastic rule of "the real worth of a thing" than by any fanciful standard of fame. He bowed with deference to the judgment of the book-sellers, and trimmed his sails dexterously as the "aura popularis" shifted. "If it is na weil bobbit," he writes to his printer, on turning out a less lucky novel, "we'll bob it again." His muse was of that school who seek the greatest happiness of the greatest possible number. We can hardly imagine him invoking her, like Milton—

"Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few."

Still less can we imagine him, like the blind old bard, feeding his soul with visions of posthumous glory, and spinning out epics for five pounds apiece.

It is singular that Scott, although he set as high a money value on his productions as the most enthusiastic of the "trade" could have done, in a literary view, should have held them so cheap. "Whatever others may be," he said, "I have never been a partisan of my own poetry; as John Wilkes declared that, 'in the height of his success, he had

himself never been a Wilkite.'” Considering the poet’s popularity, this was but an indifferent compliment to the taste of his age. With all this disparagement of his own productions, however, Scott was not insensible to criticism. He says somewhere, indeed, that “if he had been conscious of a single vulnerable point in himself, he would not have taken up the business of writing.” But on another occasion he writes, “I make it a rule never to read the attacks made upon me.” And Captain Hall remarks: “He never reads the criticisms on his books; this I know, from the most unquestionable authority. Praise, he says, gives him no pleasure, and censure annoys him.” Madame de Graffigny says, also, of Voltaire, that “he was altogether indifferent to praise, but the least word from his enemies drove him crazy.” Yet both these authors banqueted on the sweets of panegyric as much as any who ever lived. They were in the condition of an epicure, whose palate has lost its relish for the dainty fare in which it has been so long reveling, without becoming less sensible to the annoyances of sharper and coarser flavors. It may afford some consolation to humble mediocrity, to the less fortunate votaries of the muse, that those who have reached the summit of Parnassus are not much more contented with their condition than those who are scrambling among the bushes at the bottom of the mountain. The fact seems to be, as Scott himself intimates more than once, that the joy is in the chase, whether in the prose or the poetry of life.

But it is high time to terminate our lucubrations, which, however imperfect and unsatisfactory, have already run to a length that must trespass on the patience of the reader. We rise from the perusal of these delightful volumes with the

same sort of melancholy feeling with which we wake from a pleasant dream. The concluding volume, of which such ominous presage is given in the last sentence of the fifth, has not yet reached us; but we know enough to anticipate the sad catastrophe it is to unfold of the drama. In those which we have seen, however, we have beheld a succession of interesting characters come upon the scene—and pass away to their long home. “Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced,” seem to haunt us, too, as we write. The imagination reverts to Abbotsford—the romantic and once brilliant Abbotsford—the magical creation of *his* hands. We see its halls radiant with the hospitality of *his* benevolent heart, thronged with pilgrims from every land, assembled to pay homage at the shrine of genius, echoing to the blithe music of those festal holidays, when young and old met to renew the usages of the good old times.

“These were its charms—but all these charms are fled.”

Its courts are desolate, or trodden only by the foot of the stranger. The stranger sits under the shadows of the trees which his hand planted. The spell of the enchanter is dissolved. His wand is broken. And the mighty Minstrel himself now sleeps in the bosom of the peaceful scenes, embellished by his taste and which his genius has made immortal.

THE
*SOCIAL CONDITION OF WOMAN.**

INVENTIVE writing is full of commonplace respecting woman, drawn from the feelings or the imagination, sometimes depicting her character as a brilliant constellation of all the virtues, sometimes as a virulent concentration of all the vices and weaknesses incident to human nature. For instance, we take up Otway's "Orphan," and we read in one place verses like these :

" Who can describe
Women's hypocrisies ? Their subtile wiles,
Betraying smiles, feigned tears, inconstancies ?
Their painted outsides and corrupted minds ?
The sum of all their follies and their falsehoods ? "

And again, at another page, these :

" Your sex
Was never in the right : you're always false
Or silly. Even your dreams are not more

* 1. *Memoirs of Celebrated Women of all Countries.* By Madame Junot. 2 vols.

2. *Noble Deeds of Woman.* 2 vols., 12mo. 1836.

3. *The History of the Condition of Women in Various Ages and Nations.* By Mrs. D. L. Child. 2 vols., 12mo. 1835.

4. Legouvé, *Le Mérite des Femmes.*

Fantastical than your appetites. You think
Of nothing twice. Opinion you have none :
To-day you are nice, to-morrow not so fine ;
Now smile, then frown ; now sorrowful, then glad ;
Now pleased, now not ; and all you know not why.
Virtue you affect."

Is this harsh ? Turn the leaves, and you come to the other side of the question, in that beautiful passage of the same Otway's " Venice Preserved " :

" O woman, lovely woman ! Nature made you
To temper man ; we had been brutes without you.
Angels are painted fair, to look like you ;
There's in you all that we believe of heaven ;
Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,
Eternal joy and everlasting love."

It would be curious, if in our way, to run over what the novelists and dramatists have had to say upon this point. In the latter especially there is a perfect arsenal of the small artillery of stale reproaches on feminine weakness and falsehood. In reference to all such matter, whether set fixedly in books, or floating on the surface of society, we hold this axiom in reverent belief : there is no man of good morals who does not admire and esteem the female character. Whoever disparages the female sex is of necessity a bad son, and a thousand to one he is, in his custom of life, a bad member of society.

Reflecting upon the diverse forms under which woman appears in the great classic writers of our language, we think it demonstrates that each one's individual temper and experience, much more than philosophical observation of

general fact, have produced his particular representation of her social destiny.

Open, for instance, the poems of Pope and Swift, which abound with such coarse, bitter, humiliating satire of the female sex. Are all women, then, without discrimination, utterly destitute of delicacy and purity of sentiment, as those writers would have it? Or was there not some seated distemper in the moral constitution of their minds which jaundiced all their views of woman? The truth in this matter is familiar to every scholar. They were each the object of the devoted but unmerited and unrequited affections of some of the best hearts that ever beat in human bosoms. What men deeply injure, that they deeply hate. Festering in misanthropical celibacy, the mind of each transferred to the canvas its own dark tints of spiteful malignity in place of the reflected image they professed to copy. If we analyze the life and character of Milton and Byron, we shall there in like manner find a key to all the peculiarities in their conception of the social condition of woman. There is one poet and one prose writer, however, each preëminent for his intuitive perception of character, and his marvelous knowledge of human nature, who have written a vast deal concerning the female sex, full of instruction, good sense, good feeling and truth. We mean Shakespeare and Scott. They loved fondly, but wisely, and there was not, therefore, in their domestic history, any great disturbing fact to distort their judgment of the fair sex; and they have recorded woman as she is; rich in the virtues and graces appropriate to her career on earth; if with less of the sustained vigor of active resolution, and less of the analytical comprehensiveness of intellect than man, yet with

more intensity of purpose, and more instinctive quickness and force of thought in a given emergency; when good, in principle better than he, when bad, worse; in a word, neither greater nor less than man, but different, as her natural vocation is different, and both so far equal, that each is superior to the other in their respective departments of thought and action.

In taking up this topic of the social condition of woman in modern Christendom, we avow in advance that we are not preparing to present a mere panegyric on the female sex. What we propose to ourselves on this occasion is neither a reasoned analysis of the general spirit of the gentler sex, nor a diatribe upon her defects, nor a declamation upon her excellences; but a just deduction and estimate, so far as we are able to give it, of what Christian civilization has done for the condition and character of woman. After speaking of the leading facts of her history, we may best pronounce upon her true rank in the scale of society, and of moral and intellectual beings.

Without covering so much ground as would be needful were we to attempt elucidating at large the condition of woman in societies unconnected with our own, it will suffice if, as preliminary to considering her place in the economy of modern Christendom, we briefly explain what she is in countries highly civilized but not Christian, in a purely barbarous state of society generally, and what she was in those communities which chiefly contributed to form the spirit of Christendom, namely, in Palestine, in Greece, in Rome, and among the ancient Germans.

Of modern countries highly civilized but not Christian we shall take but two examples, China and Hindostan, both

as composing so large a portion of the human race, and as having really attained a high degree of general culture.

In considering the purely savage or hunter stage of human society, notwithstanding there be in different countries great diversities in the condition of the female sex, yet in every case we discover certain marked traits which clearly indicate the deleterious effect of barbarism of manners upon the social position of woman. One is the similarity of savage life, in the nearest of all the social relations, to the condition of brute animals. In the hunter state the supply of the first necessity of life, food, is precarious, and this uncertainty of the means of subsistence counteracts the natural tendency of mankind to a permanent connubial union between the sexes, a tendency which develops itself more and more in proportion as society grows more fixed and stable in its forms. Hence in many such communities children are distinguished with reference to their mother alone, whose name they bear, and not their father's. In some of those tribes of North America which admitted of hereditary sovereignty, royalty of blood was tested by derivation from the mother alone, in reverse of the usage of all civilized nations. Such institutions or usages necessarily imply the degradation of the female sex. Another of the distinctive peculiarities of the savage life is the common fact that women are held as property. In some barbarous communities the wife is purchased, in others she is forcibly seized by her future husband and master. And universally we may say, at all times, in every climate, under whatever circumstances of local situation, savage man regards and treats the feebler sex as born to menial service. Woman is the humble slave of his pleasure, the handmaid of his daily

wants, his laborious drudge of the field, the household, and the journey, consigned to toil and subservience, while he, the proud lord of creation, aspires exclusively to the stirring chances of the chase, or the yet nobler game of war. Nor does this description apply to a class only of savage society. Such is the general condition of women in barbarous communities, however exalted the station of their rude connections, how much soever they happen to be cherished by their untutored lords. Out of innumerable illustrations of this which might be given, we select one for its peculiar fullness, pertinency, and homely force and truth. Samuel Hearne is well known as one of the adventurous explorers of the Arctic coast of North America. He was returning on his way back to Prince of Wales's Fort, unsuccessful from his second expedition, when he met Matonabee, whom he describes as "a powerful and intelligent chief," and who undertook to explain the cause of his failure, ascribing it to the want of female attendants. "In an expedition of this kind," said Matonabee, "when all the men are so heavily laden that they can neither hunt nor travel to any considerable distance, in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labor?—Women were made for labor; one of them can carry or haul as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, rake our fires at night; and, in fact, there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance or for any length of time in this country without them; and yet, though they do everything, they are maintained at a trifling expense; for, as they always act the cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence." Under the auspices of Matonabee, and with

seven of his wives to accompany him, Hearne set out on his third expedition; and in his plain, unvarnished description of the incredible hardships he underwent, and of the excessive toil imposed upon the females of the expedition, we have a vivid representation of the servile and wretched condition of the female sex in the very highest rank of their nation; for such was Matonabee, as expressly stated by Hearne, and as incidentally apparent throughout his narrative of the journey. And if in some savage societies the condition of woman was better, in others it was worse than represented in the pages of Hearne's "Journey."

While the people of Hindostan, it is true, have made such advances in certain of the forms and fixed improvements of civilization, that they can not be deemed a barbarous people, still the practice of infanticide and the disregard of chastity are facts upon the face of things attesting a barbaric degradation in the social position of woman. Yet there it is that the widow proves how irreparable is her grief by devoting herself on the funeral pile as a burnt-offering to hallow the memory of her deceased lord. But how did he earn such unequalled ardor of love? We may read in the Abbé Dubois an extract from one of the sacred books of the Hindoos, which expressly enjoins upon her not merely that she is to obey her husband as a master, but that she is to revere him as a god. "When in the presence of her husband," are the words, "a woman must keep her eyes upon her master, and be ready to receive his commands. When he speaks she must be quiet, and listen to nothing besides. When he calls she must leave everything else and attend upon him alone. A woman has no other god on earth than her husband. The most excellent of all good works she

can perform is to gratify him with the strictest obedience. This should be her only devotion. Though he be aged, infirm, dissipated, drunkard, or a debauchee, she must still regard him as her god." Such is the text. And these precepts, it is notorious, are practically observed in the domestic intercourse of the Hindoos.

Nor is the state of things any better in China, as is well stated in, if we remember rightly, Morrison's authentic translation of "The She-king": "In childhood slighted, in maidenhood sold, in mature womanhood shackled by the laws which prescribe numerous and unpleasing duties, or rather tasks, to their husband's relations—in widowhood controlled by their own sons, in all ages and states considered as immeasurably inferior to men, denied even moral agency in the power of doing either good or evil—woman is considered by the laws of the country as the bond and appointed slave of man and nature, made such by the same law that gives to the sun its light and to the leopard its spots; and they find their fate but slightly modified by the opinions and practices of their husbands and fathers." No addition of ours to this comprehensive description of the social condition of woman in cultivated and lettered China could augment its graphic force.

The Christian religion issued out of Judea; and our opinions, especially in Protestant countries where the Bible is so universally read, expounded, and revered, are greatly influenced by the Old Testament, that is, the inspired history, laws, poetry, prophecies, and moral disquisitions of the Jews, which are incorporated into our literature and bias all our trains of thought. Society, as represented in the Bible, had already emerged from the barbarism of the hunter state,

and presents itself in the three successive stages of the pastoral, the agricultural, and the commercial and manufacturing states, each being superior in civilization to its predecessor. Substantially the same system of legislation, however, regulated the whole period of time, from the age of the patriarchs, or at least from the exodus out of Egypt, down to the advent of our Saviour. And it was not such as favored the condition of the female sex; for polygamy obtained, as in other Oriental countries, and women were entirely dependent upon the men, who might repudiate them at will and without cause. Such laws could not be otherwise than decisive of their general condition; and a careful study of particular facts will bring the mind to the same conclusion which a consideration of those laws would lead us to draw. The persevering attachment of Jacob for Rachel shows that in the patriarchal age woman had acquired a value unknown to the hunter-life; but all the circumstances of their domestic history, so distinctly told by the sacred penman, show at the same time that their love was destitute of the delicacy and individuality essential to the true respectability of woman. Again, it is observable that Sarah, Rebekah, Zipporah, Ruth, Tamar, the wives and daughters of rich men and princes, appear before us continually in the performance of menial services, or humbly uniting in the pleasures of their lords, not as with us the cherished objects of respectful affection and equal observance. And the remarkable incidents, which wellnigh occasioned the annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin, as related in the book of Judges, when the man of Gibeah, instead of contending to the death as we should have done in defense of the females of his family, offered them as a sacrifice to purchase the

safety of his guest, are characteristic of the contemporary estimation of woman. To be sure, her condition improved along with the introduction of arts and manufactures into the country; and what it was in the Augustan age of Judea we see plainly in Solomon's description of a good wife: "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." Such, therefore, was the model of a perfect woman at the highest point of civilization among the Jews—a laborious artisan, a discreet housewife, and withal one amiable and judicious in her deportment and conversation. At the same time, even at this period, there is no social equality, no intellectual refinement, in the comparative condition of the female sex; it is that of an Asiatic laboring under the disabilities of polygamy, just as in the Syria of our own day.

Pass to the Greeks, to a European population, though in and upon the confines of Asia. We know little of the heroic age of Greece; but that little exhibits a manifest social superiority of woman over what she was in Judea, because polygamy, with all its train of attendant ills, disappears. It is said in the *Iliad* of bad men, that they deserve not to enjoy the rights of a citizen, nor the happiness of domestic life; and, as to be out of the pale of citizenship was to be an outlaw, we may judge, by the coupling of it with domesticity in the poet's mind, how much woman had begun to be prized. And we think the fact that in primitive Greece so many women were deified, and the female deities, as Rhea,

Juno, Proserpina, Venus, Minerva, held in at least equal veneration with the male ones, testifies that some imperfect glimpse of the true destiny of woman was dawning out upon the age. To this hour, Andromache and Penelope are beautiful examples of conjugal truth and virtue. On the other hand, so many women, who attained a bad eminence by their vices—Medea, Phædra, Helen, Clytemnestra—do yet attest the growing personal consequence of the sex, in this the cradle of the intellect and civilization of Europe.

Two republics, contrasted in all their institutions, stood at the head of the Greeks. In Sparta, everything was forced, artificial, unnatural; in Athens, the finely organized Hellenic mind, enamored of taste, beauty, and refinement, had free scope in the following of its native bent. Lycurgus impressed on the women of Sparta a character of hardness and exclusive devotion to the military success of the republic, at the expense of every feminine quality. To wrestle in the Palæstra promiscuously with men, and half naked; not to know or conceive that which is the most indispensable, and yet the first and lowest of the virtues of a wife; to rejoice over the death of a son in the wars; to practice the crime of infanticide as a matter of course, if a child seemed to be of feeble structure—such was the education, such the character, such the habits of the women of Lacedæmon. Not so in civilized Attica. There a singular state of things ensued, from the keen sense which the cultivated Athenians felt of the value of intellectual female society, acting upon their peculiar domestic institutions. Usage, more despotic and more tyrannical than law, exacted of matrons and other ingenuous women a life of extreme seclusion. To live in society, to cultivate the exquisite social arts which give in-

tellectual interest to the female sex, was to overstep those conventional boundaries of virtue which admitted of no return. Hence, although in Attica and other parts of Greece of congenial manners, highly accomplished women existed, and held a preëminently brilliant position in society, celebrated by poetic and mimetic art, courted by philosophers, and enriched by princes—Sappho, the poetess, Leæna, famed for her constancy to the slayers of the Pisistratidæ—Aspasia, at once a Ninon de l'Enclos to Socrates, and a Maintenon to Pericles—Lais, the glory and the shame of Corinth—Phryne, who offered to rebuild Thebes at her own charge, and who could boast of a golden image erected to her honor in the temple of Apollo at Delphi—yet all these were public wantons, who usurped among the spiritual and beauty-loving Greeks that estimation which is the rightful due of purity and virtue alone, and which degraded irreparably, while it seemed the most to honor, the nicely constituted character of woman.

Proceed now to Italy, and raise the veil from the domestic sanctuary of the Romans. There is nothing more striking all through the history of the kings and of the early republic than the new aspect under which woman presents herself, so different from anything in Greece. The Roman matron possessed the patriotism of the Spartan without her cruelty and coarseness, and the purity of the Athenian without her extreme seclusion; she fell short of the modern European in that intellectual refinement and high accomplishment which, combined with virtue, belong exclusively to Christendom. Her occupations for a long period were such as to imply inferiority of condition. Thus, when the Sabines made peace with the Romans at the conclusion of the war

occasioned by the forcible abduction of the Sabine maidens, it was stipulated that no labor should be exacted of the latter except spinning.* Hence an old writer, who enumerates the qualities of a good wife, to probity, beauty, fidelity, and chastity, adds *skill in spinning*. Nay, the Emperor Augustus seldom wore any apparel but of the manufacture of his wife, daughter, and the ladies of his household.†

What originally gave consequence to the female sex in Rome was the necessity of seeking them, under which the infant people of Romulus labored. Thereafter we perceive, in the important part played by individual women, what was the general consequence of the sex. Hersilia, with her fellow matrons, reconciled the Sabines to the city of her forced adoption; the crime of Tarquin gave birth to the republic; the death of Virginia destroyed the tyranny of the Decemvirs; Veturia rescued Rome from the wrath of Coriolanus; when Brennus held the city at ransom, the Roman ladies stripped themselves of their gold and jewels for the service of the republic, as they did in the equally desperate crisis of the battle of Cannæ. And where such a spirit earned to women such an estimation, it is not strange that it became lawful to praise them in the tribune, to pronounce eulogies to their memory, and to draw them in chariots to the public games; nor that we see in Rome at this time, instead of the corruption of the Paphian Venus, temples to Female Fortune, and the sacred fire of the republic consigned in custody to the virgin priestess of the spotless Vesta.

In the decay of the republic, and the still deeper abase-

* Plutarch's Romulus.

† Sueton, August. 73.

ment of the empire, as the female sex still continues an important element of society, this consequence follows. Frequent examples of eminent female excellence occur, contrasted with cases of equally eminent infamy. If Cornelia could inspire the Gracchi, and Julia sustain the fortunes of Pompey, and another Cornelia nobly share them for better and for worse, and Atia form the genius of Octavius, and Portia approve herself worthy to be the wife of Brutus, yet in the same age Metella could dishonor the household of Sylla, and Catiline and Clodius range at will among the best in blood and highest in rank of the patrician wives of Rome. So, in the next generation, we have a Julia Augusta, and a Messalina steeped in the very lees of vice, by the side of an Agrippina at the pinnacle of dignity and faith. And when the profligacy of imperial Rome had sunk to a depth of abomination which no modern tongue can express, nor any modern mind well conceive, there were two Arrias, a Paulina, and an Eponina, who recalled the ancient glory of the best matrons of the republic. But there needed a new dispensation of religion for the moral reform of society in the days of the empire; nor that only, since the whole frame of society was corrupt; and nothing less than a dispensation of blood and fire could suffice to work its physical renovation. Long before the overthrow of the empire, indeed, Christianity had begun to make its benign influences felt in the condition and character of woman; but as its operation covered a later period, and chiefly in that was active upon the present civilization of modern Europe, before entering upon it we subjoin a few words on the social standing of the female sex among the invading Germans. For, while our religion is derived from Judea, and our intel-

lectual tastes from the Greeks and Romans, the basis of our manners descends to us from the Saxons, Franks, and other tribes of the German race, who overturned the Roman Empire and established themselves upon its ruins.

Our most authentic knowledge of this great primitive state of modern Europe is derived from the works of Cæsar and Tacitus. The picture which these authors present to us displays in part the usual features of savage life, in part others of a better aspect and higher promise. Among the ancient Germans, as in other like conditions of society, all agricultural as well as household labor was devolved upon their women, and the infirm or less respected male members of the community. In Gaul, the husband possessed the power of life and death over his wife. But in Britain, and especially Germany, it seems to have been otherwise; or at least, if such were the legal power of the husband, yet custom had established more of practical equality between the sexes than obtained in Palestine, in Greece, or even in Rome. The Germans, above all other barbarians, held in special regard the singleness of the connubial relation, and the purity of the female character. They married by the interchange of gifts in cattle and arms; for the wife, says Tacitus, that she may not imagine herself beyond the thought of virtue or the vicissitudes of war, is admonished, by the very auspices of incipient matrimony, that she comes to be the associate of her husband's toils and dangers, the same to suffer and the same to dare, whether in peace or in battle. But there is a still clearer manifestation, in another place, of our own modern spirit of chivalrous admiration of the sex, animating the rude hearts of these wild hunters of the north. The Germans fought their battles with their

wives and families near at hand. These, continues Tacitus, are the sacredest witnesses of martial prowess, these its loudest applauders. Each one carries his wounds to his mother, to his wife; nor do these shrink from numbering or exacting them; and they administer food and exhortation to the combatants. It is had in remembrance that their line of battle, when already bent and broken, has been restored by their women, with constancy of prayers and bared bosoms, and warnings of coming captivity, which they dread far more intolerably on account of their female connections. Wherefore, the more effectually to insure the execution of treaties, noble virgins are demanded as hostages to bind the public faith. For they think there is something holy and foreseeing in the mind of woman; for which reason they neither despise her counsels nor neglect her answers. Under Vespasian, we have seen Veleda, as formerly Aurinia and others, held by them in deep reverence, not with adulation, nor as goddesses, and yet withal as persons endued with special authority and wisdom. Is not all this finely conceived; and an omen of what woman is to be, when these uncultivated barbarians shall have been exalted, by religious and intellectual teaching, into civilized Christians?

In considering this point, of the particular influence of Christianity upon the condition of woman, there is a material distinction important to be noted. Certain effects are often described as evidently flowing from the tenets and general spirit of our religion, although not directly and specifically aimed at by express inculcation of the gospel. For instance, submission to existing political institutions is commanded, notwithstanding the corruptions of the empire would seem to have been such as to justify, nay, to require

revolution for their reform. And yet nothing is clearer than that the general tendency of the doctrines of the New Testament is to further republican equality. It is a religion for the universal human race. It associates sovereign and subject in the same service of religion upon earth; it ushers them into equal responsibility in heaven for good done or evil prevented, or the reverse, in the passages of this sub-lunary life of probation. It is emphatically a leveling religion, and of the right kind, for it levels upward; elevating all men to the same high standard of sanctity, faith, and spiritual promise on earth as in heaven. Just so it is that, wherever Christianity is taught, it inevitably dignifies and exalts the female character. Throughout the New Testament she is contemplated as a spiritual and immortal being, the equal partaker with man of all the offices of religion here, and of all its divine aspirations hereafter. We listen to prayer and exhortation within the same holy walls of God's temples; we kneel in supplication to the same consecrated altar; children are admitted into the visible Church of Christ at the same baptismal font; we mutually plight our faith under the solemn sanction and observances of a common religion; and, when the dearest bonds of blood or affection are sundered by death, there is left us the one admirable solace of sorrow, that the sainted spirit of the wife, sister, daughter, we may have lost, has winged its flight upward to rest for ever in the bosom of the Christian's God.

We familiarly know how different in this relation are the opinions and feelings of that religion which, in its single adoration of one overruling God, as in its respect for Moses and for Jesus Christ, approaches nearer Christianity than the old pagan system of polytheism. There is much con-

troversy as to whether Mohammed did or did not teach that women have no souls. We have not examined the Koran with reference to the question; but an author, whose learning, judgment, and good faith are worthy of all confidence, Father Feijoo, in his elaborate defense of women, says he carefully perused it in the sole view to ascertain the point; and the Koran is in fact silent on the subject. And the intellectual, or rather spiritual degradation of woman, in the countries of the Mohammedan law, is deduced from this silence more than from any positive text; and has a deeper foundation than text or doctrine, in the practice of polygamy, and the prevalence of purchased connection, the standing curse of society in the luxurious climate of the Levant. Nay, the propagation of the sanguinary fanaticism of Mohammed and his disciples, in regions once occupied by Christianity, may be partly ascribed to the important difference between the two religions, and the superior correspondence of Islamism to the settled moral and social debasement of Asia in respect of woman. A curious and interesting illustration of this occurs in the case of Spain, when the occasional intermarriages of Christian with Mohammedan, and the intermixture of the Arabs and Goths by reason of the conquests made by each in the territory of the other, and the frequent residence or visits of Christians at the Moorish courts of Saragossa, Cordova, Seville, or Granada, and of Moors in the Christian cities of Leon and Castile, visibly modified the manners of each nation, communicating to the Goths something of the Asiatic averseness to female independence, and to the Spanish Mohammedan something of the chivalry and courtesy of the modern inhabitants of Christian Europe.

What we have thus reasoned of the influence of Chris-

tianity applies to all its forms, and to the institution itself as we are the witnesses of its operations in modern times and in the Protestant countries of Europe or America. But, in the early ages, when Christianity first impressed itself upon European society, other religious causes besides the essential doctrine of the Christian faith aided it in the noble work of elevating the social condition of woman.

Whoever is personally acquainted with the usages of society in the countries of the Roman Catholic and Greek faith, which compose the larger part of both Europe and America, can not fail to be struck with the reverence there paid to females of sainted memory, martyrs of old who have been canonized for their devotedness to Christianity, or the Virgin Mary and other females consecrated in the New Testament. The Virgin is, perhaps, in all those countries, a more constant object of address for interest or protection than even our Saviour himself; so much so, that this very fact is among Protestants a common article of reproach against Greek and Roman Catholic Christians. In countries dependent upon the See of Rome, while the veneration of the Virgin Mother is not less intense than it is in Greece or in Russia, the veneration of other sainted females is more universal. Their images and their pictures everywhere meet the eye; their festivals are of continual recurrence; churches and shrines are dedicated to their memory; their names are perpetually upon the lip in every hour of business or pleasure; children receive their names, and learn to regard them through life as their special intercessors in all seasons of doubt or peril for the mercy and favor of Heaven. This may be very exceptionable as matter of religious doctrine; at least it is very abhorrent to the usages

of devout Protestants. Its influence, however, in the middle ages, eminently contributed to exalt the character of the female sex. It habituated and still habituates all persons of whatever condition to the contemplation of feminine excellence of a spiritual, moral, or intellectual kind, in contradistinction to the less refined and ennobled estimation of woman in countries out of the pale of Christendom.

Furthermore, the individuals thus regarded with a veneration so peculiar as even to offend the principles of Christians professing the reformed faith, belonged to the vast body of women of the early ages, who by their constancy, their zeal, their sufferings, their self-sacrifice, their martyrdom, were living examples of the wonderful influence of the tenets of Christianity in purifying the heart and elevating the character of woman. In the impressible and enthusiastic constitution of the female mind, there is a remarkable aptitude for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. We see the readiness of women in receiving and their instrumentality in propagating the gospel in the inspired narratives of the evangelists; we see it in the teachings and reasonings of the epistles; we see it in the writings of the early fathers of the Church; we see it in the innumerable cases of surpassing magnanimity and fortitude which honor the female name through all the persecutions of the pagan emperors; we see it in Saint Helena opening the heart of Constantine, and thus making Christianity the religion of the empire; we see it in the conversion of Clovis and his Franks through the pious eloquence of Clotilda. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? What woman of sense or sensibility but would cling to a faith which lifted her from the humiliation of long centuries into her appropriate sphere of moral dignity

and spiritual value and influence, and thus redeemed her as it were from the divine malediction which fell in paradise on our erring mother Eve? No wonder that Christianity commended itself to the female mind; no wonder that woman was last at the cross and foremost at the grave; no wonder that persecution did but prove her truth, and thus filled the Roman and Greek world with so many examples of female excellence honored and revered in the traditions of the Church.

One thing in addition. We cordially concur with all other Protestants, and with many if not the major part of Catholics, in the condemnation of monastic institutions; because we know they are unfitted to the advanced stage of our civilization. The times when they were calculated to be useful have ceased to exist. But he who is unaware of the important uses they had in the furtherance of intelligence, religion, and moral purity in the middle ages, must be untaught in the lessons of history. In the first place, they were the sole repositories of knowledge and religion in those barbarous times, standing like oases in the midst of the desert, green spots of earth environed with desolation and corruption. In the second place, they were sources of moral influence particularly beneficial to the dignity of the female sex; for the inculcation of moral purity among the monastic orders, and the professed and apparent if not real exercise of it, had an astonishing effect upon the imagination and actions of the wild conquerors of Europe. Finally, they were the asylum and refuge of the oppressed, the destitute, the mourner, the thousands left unfriended and unhappy by the violence of the age, or unwilling to dare its dangers. Doubtless, crime and sin made their way

into the convents, as into everything human; but we are slow to believe that corruption ever came to pervade and permanently qualify those abodes of the vowed servants of Christ. We do injustice to religion in itself in supposing there is no truth or reality in the profession of moral rectitude. In fact, a large part of the reproachful matter current on this point comes from the pen of M. de Potter, a systematic and inveterate foe of the very institution of Christianity. And his great object in collecting it avowedly was, to serve the cause of irreligion. At any rate, believing or admitting whatever we will of the alleged corruptions of the monastic institution, its beneficial influence on the character and condition of woman at the period when European society settled into its present forms, is a demonstrable fact in the history of Christendom.

Christianity, therefore, proved infinitely efficacious in elevating the character and condition of woman. It began to work out this effect even amid all the corruption of the declining period of the Roman Empire. And its beneficial operation was yet more discernible in the sequel, when it came to coöperate with some remarkable peculiarities in the secular institutions founded by the new masters of Europe. For the barbarians, destructively as they pursued their career of conquest, yet brought along with them the germ of many things which constitute with good reason the boast and pride of modern times. What they did toward the cultivation of woman would suffice to recompense humanity for much of the desolation and misery which, in the long interval between their fierce eruptions from the North and the renovation of civilized life, they inflicted on the European world.

How it was that the feudal system acquired possession of Europe belongs not to the present subject. Suppose it, however, to exist in full vigor, and let us see wherein it affected the condition of woman.

In comparing the political institutions of ancient and modern Europe with other great subdivisions of the human family, we observe that in one an empire is split into fragment states, or smaller states are united in a single empire, by the transmission of sovereignty through the female sex in a manner quite peculiar to Christendom. In the republics of Greece and Rome no such fact occurs. Nor even in the time of the Cæsars and their successors do we find any instance of sovereignty and territorial power annexed to females and transferred from one family to another by marriage. Among the Mohammedans, also, territorial sovereignty belongs only to man. True it is that revenues of particular cities, islands, or provinces are specially appropriated to particular female connections of the Sultan; but these are held not in personal sovereignty, transmissible through the form of marriage in succession, but as a temporary appendage merely; just as, under the Persian Empire, one city furnished the head-dress of the queens, another their slippers, and a third their girdle;* and as the queen-consort in England anciently had queen-gold reserved to her out of the rent of royal domains for specified objects of apparel and maintenance.† But the conquerors of Europe introduced laws of inheritance which had the effect either of making a woman a feudal sovereign in her own right, or at least the medium of conveying the feudal rights

* Cicero, *Orat. in Verrem*, l. iii., c. 33.

† Blackstone's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 221.

of her deceased father to the person of her husband. Take the feudal law, for instance, as practiced in England. For some time after the Conquest, dignity and power were annexed to the tenure of lands in the usual condition of feudal service rendered by the holders as liegemen of the king, or vassals of some intermediate chief. He who held lands of the king was a baron of Parliament, the immediate lord of tenants holding in like manner of him, and the qualified sovereign of the territory constituting his fief or fiefs. Some of these fiefs or estates with dignity attached were male fiefs, that is, limited to male heirs of the baron or knight in possession; but others, and those not the least valuable, descended to his heirs generally, females included in default of male heirs. If a baron died, leaving several daughters, either the king selected some one of them, or her husband, to be invested with the feudal dignity; or it remained in abeyance, or suspent, until by the extinction of other branches there was but a single male heir entitled by blood. If there was but one daughter, she became at once a baroness in her own right, and her husband was the possessor and administrator of her feudal power during his lifetime, when it descended to her male heirs, with her nobility and rank, so that her hand conferred or transmitted not wealth only but territorial sovereignty and political distinction.

In some instances, to be sure, these institutions operated hardly upon the affections of a woman, by restricting her freedom of choice in the bestowment of her hand. An heiress was the ward of her feudal superior; and his interest, as the political chief, was to be consulted in the disposition of her person, because involving that of her estates and vassals. The ancient records of the exchequer, says

Edmund Burke, afford many instances where some women purchased by heavy fines the privilege of a single life, some the free choice of a husband, others the liberty of rejecting some one particularly disagreeable. And there are not wanting examples where a woman, having offered a considerable fine to escape marriage with a certain person, the suitor on the other hand has outbid her, and has thus effected his object avowedly against her inclination. Notwithstanding the occurrence of such abuses, the general operation of the feudal law of succession was to augment the importance and respectability of women; for the lord depended very much upon the good will of his vassals; and the particular instances of misrule in question show that woman had at least a will to be consulted and conciliated. And, if herself a great vassal, she exercised a direct personal power in public affairs, which of necessity made her to be feared and regarded. In England, for instance, abbesses attended Parliament in person. Lay peeresses did not appear in person, but they nominated their proxies just like lay peers; and in the Parliament of the 31 Edward III. it appears there were ten peeresses who thus voted by proxy among the great barons. And, previous to the passage of the Reform Bill, females, as proprietors of boroughs, could and did in various cases hold and exercise the right of returning members to the House of Commons.

Such was the principle. And, to comprehend thoroughly its political operation, let us consider it in the cases of great states, rather than in the obscurer examples of subordinate feudal sovereignties. In France, a peculiar text called the Salic law, whose origin is lost in the darkness of the barbarous ages, excluded the female line from the throne; but in

all the other great monarchies of Europe, and even in the feudal subdivisions of France itself, there was no distinction in this respect between the regal and any other dignity. Thus it happened, by the marriage of English princes with French heiresses, that Guienne, Anjou, and other provinces of France became subject to England. Nay, the English long denied the force of the Salic law itself; in pursuance of which Henry V., like his predecessor, Edward III., invaded France, claiming the crown through a female, in preference to a male heir nearly related to the last monarch; and the kings of England, until near to our own day, continued to style themselves kings of France. Thus, in process of time, some of the large French fiefs became vested in the crown. Thus Catalonia was united to Aragon, and Aragon to Castile. And thus the grandson of a Duke of Austria came to be master of the Netherlands, Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, and Spain. To say nothing of women who, like Boadicea of ancient Britain, ascended the throne themselves, and either remained unmarried, as Elizabeth Tudor, and Christina of Sweden, or, if married, yet retained still the government of their hereditary dominions, as Mary Tudor, and Anne Stuart of England, Mary of Scotland, Isabel of Castile, and Maria Theresa of Hungary; at the present time, Spain and Portugal have youthful queens for their sovereigns, and Great Britain will, in all probability, devolve on a princess likewise, through marriage with whom the crowns of each of those countries may pass into a foreign house; just in the same way that a Bourbon originally acquired Spain, and a Guelph inherited Great Britain.

It requires no extended argument to show the efficacy of such laws in imparting personal respectability to woman.

In the first place, the world saw her actually possessed of power, and invested with all its external insignia, its pomp, and its imposing circumstances. In the second place, she became an object of desire and pursuit to the other sex, not merely because, as in other countries, she might confer wealth in the bestowment of her hand, but because rank, power, and sovereignty itself passed by her to her husband and to her descendants. Proceed we, therefore, to the social state of the Franks and Normans, so as to see what influence that had upon the condition of woman.

One of the most eminent statesmen and profound scholars of our day, M. Guizot, ascribes much of the importance of woman in the social relation of modern Christendom to the peculiar mode of life adopted by the northern invaders almost universally, in connection with or in consequence of the introduction of the feudal system. Each baron or landholder established himself in some elevated or otherwise defensible spot, which he fortified, constructing there his feudal castle, where he lived in solitary independence. Who are the inmates of his castle? His wife, his children, his domestics, his military retainers, perhaps a small number of freemen who have no lands themselves and attach themselves to his fortune. Around the foot of his castle is grouped a little settlement, chiefly composed of serfs, who cultivate his domain, and look to the castle and its military occupants for protection in all emergencies of danger. Under such circumstances, the life of each individual of ingenuous condition, except when he was engaged in the chase, or in expeditions of war, was emphatically domestic. In Rome, as in Greece, the life of men was, on the other hand, civic. They dwelt in cities for the most part, repairing to

the country only for temporary recreation. The private dwellings even of the wealthy were nowise calculated for what we know as domestic comfort and enjoyment. They had sumptuous dining halls, but none of the commodious apartments for retirement and repose, none of the bright saloons for conversation and domestic association, which belong to modern residences. The social intercourse of men was carried on at the baths, in the forum, and under the basilica, which decorated every considerable town or city. Those of the highest rank in society depended upon the good will and the votes of their fellow townsmen for everything which distinguished life, or made it useful and endurable. Hence the great Roman statesman would have his dwelling so constructed that all the citizens of Rome might overlook him in every act and movement of his whole existence; whereas the baron of the middle ages, living isolated, independent of the world, even at feud with some of his neighbors, had few or no social resources except in the bosom of his own family, or in the midst of little circles of the same description, allied to him by affinity or friendship. It was for these narrow domestic societies of the baronial hall that so many lays of love and *fabliaux* of the wandering minstrels of that period were composed, giving birth to a delightful fireside literature, quite unknown to classical antiquity. In such habitudes of life there was full scope for the development of that respectful regard for the female sex which we have seen to exist in the forests of Germany and Scandinavia.

To the dignity and importance of the female sex, as produced by the combination of circumstances which we have described, namely, the influence of Christianity and the

old German deference for women, developed in the peculiar social state of the feudal masters of Europe, there came finally to be added the institution of chivalry. This also had its root in the military usages of the ancient Germans ; for the investiture of arms, the fondness for single combats, the painting of shields, and the presence of women at martial sports and exercises are as plainly recorded in Tacitus as in Froissart or Saint Palaye. At the present time the mind sees much that is exaggerated and extravagant in the maxims and practices of chivalry. Errant knights, roving over the country slaying monsters, combating giants and enchanters, delivering distressed damsels from the hands of cruel oppressors, and seeking adventures all over the world, are alien to existing manners and the fixed civilization of the day. So also are tournaments, jousts, and the deeds of steel-clad knights deciding battles by their single prowess. Amadis de Gaul would at this time be deemed a worse madman than Don Quixote de la Mancha ; and Orlando quite as furious in his soberest moments as when he split solid rocks in twain with his good sword for the jealousy of the false traitor Medoro. Civilization has accomplished all this by substituting the reign of law for that of violence, diffusing knowledge, and infusing in society such notions of right and wrong as do away with the vocation of individual redresses of injured innocence. And the invention of gunpowder, transferring the decision of battles to the organized action of masses instead of the rash prowess of a few knights armed in proof and riding down whole battalions of helpless archers or billmen, has operated a similar change in the art of war, making it a game of skill, that is, of intellect rather than of mere physical force. But in those times, when each

one did what seemed good in his own eyes, and when every person of ingenuous birth enjoyed the right of private war, there needed something to modify and check the universal lawlessness of men and to protect the weak, and especially females, from being the victims of perpetual outrage. The evils of the social state sooner or later work out their own cure. What the world fell upon as a remedy for the disordered condition of things which we have described was the institution of chivalry, consisting in the voluntary association of men as knights pledged by promises and solemn religious sanctions to do that justice to each other and to society as a point of honor which the law of the land did not exact or had no means to enforce. To guard and protect the female sex in that universal dissolution of society was the pressing necessity, and it became of course the first point of honor in the heart of a good knight. He was educated in the baronial hall of his feudal lord; he waited on its mistress as her page; he followed its master in battle as his faithful esquire; in the bower he acquired the sentiments and the language of courtesy, gallantry, and truth; in the courtyard he trained himself to the feats of arms; in the field he emulated the prowess of his lord; and thus he grew up to be at once a brave soldier and a true gentleman. He learned to vow himself to the cause of his lady-love; he wore her scarf in the tourney; he silently invoked her name as he dashed into the *mêlée*; and reflectively he respected the whole sex through his admiration of her whom he followed as the lode-star of his life and adored as second only to his God. We are not drawing a picture of imaginary scenes proper only to the page of a romance—it is the reality so beautifully described by Burke: “That generous loy-

alty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom; that untaught grace of life, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness." It is the reality finely exemplified in the actions of Edward the Black Prince, showing by his whole life that knighthood was no idle extravagance of the obscure adventurers of the middle ages and the apocryphal romance of Turpin. It is a state of things which actually existed from the time of Charlemagne, or soon after, down to the time of the settlement of America, for at that late period all the maxims and sports of chivalry continued in full force. France and Spain were ever the nations where it flourished in the greatest splendor. And in the history of the wars waged in Italy between the Spaniards and French during the reign of Ferdinand and his grandson Charles we read continually of jousts, single combats, extravagant gallantry, and all the incidents of the early days of chivalry. Gonsalvo de Cordova, commander of the Spanish armies, a wise and shrewd man as well as a brave one; Francis of France himself; and Bayard, *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, a great noble and an eminent general officer not less than a knight—these were at the very head of the order, mirrors of courtesy, gallantry, and honor, and superlatively famous as such through all Europe.

Thus have we explained, as briefly as we might, the facts in the history of civilization which molded the condition of woman, and gave to the social relations of the sexes the

body and general outline which it wore at the time of the discovery of America. Since that period the social position of the female sex, which it attained under the continued impulse of Christianity and chivalry, has been modified by two new facts, the progress of intellectual refinement and of the useful arts. Presupposing the original causes of woman's elevation in Christendom to have had the effects ascribed, and then to have given a right impulsion to society, it is obvious that whatever develops mind and augments its ascendancy in the world must add to the respectability of woman, who depends for her social relation upon the moral and intellectual influences she exerts over man. Accordingly, though chivalry has ceased to exist, yet the moral dignity and social equality of the female sex continue to be distinctive of Christendom. If a woman belong to the industrious walks of life she has a relative value, enhanced by civilization, in her aptitude for any trade requiring skill, rather than physical strength, for its performance. If placed by fortune in a more elevated condition of society, then she is prompted and encouraged to the acquisition and the display of intellectual qualities, either in the intercourse of society, the duties of family, or the cultivation of science and literature. To appreciate this fact we have only to compare the intellectual cultivation of celebrated women in our age with any of the distinguished examples of it recorded in other times and other societies. No case can be found more favorable to the other side of the question than that of the Romans. Preëminent in classical history is Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, born of that Cornelian and Æmilian family which seemed to have a charter of hereditary genius.

There was a like succession of distinguished females in the Lælian family, three generations of which are commemorated by Cicero. Another Roman lady, Cœrellia, is famed as having gained the respect and society of Cicero by her talents and knowledge. What monument of either of them remains to attest their intellectual elevation? Wherein consisted their intellectual cultivation? It is evident that they were courted and admired, first for their good sense, and then for the grace and elegance of their conversation; but they were not to be compared to any of the great female names of modern letters, as for instance the Edgeworths, the Somervilles, the Martineaus, the Hemanses of our own living vernacular literature. In fact, no Roman authoress, deserving the name, is handed down to posterity. The younger Pliny dwells applaudingly on the character of his second wife, Calpurnia; and his affectionate account of her conveys, we suppose, the best possible idea of the cultivation of an intellectual Roman wife. "From attachment to me," he says, "she has acquired a love of study. My books she carries with her, reads, learns by heart. What solicitude she testifies when I am about to plead in a cause, what joy when I have done! She has messengers disposed to tell her what assent, what applause I receive; and what is the event of the trial. She sings my verses to her lyre with no other art but love, the best of masters. Wherefore I entertain a confident hope that our mutual attachment will be perpetual and will grow stronger and stronger with time. For it is not my youth or my person, which fail with age, but my fame, which she loves."* Interesting as this picture

* Plin. Epist., l. iv., ep. 19.

of connubial felicity is, they are moral not intellectual qualities which Pliny praises, and that of being an admirer of her husband's writings and talents stands preëminent in the catalogue. What inferior female cultivation does not this bespeak, compared with the times which produced such women as Vittoria Colonna, Maria de Padilla, Lady Fanshawe, Mrs. Hutchinson, Lady Rachel Russell, Madame Roland, and Madame Larochejaquelein, combining the highest excellence in the relations of wife and mother, and intellectual traits and acquirements infinitely beyond the Cornelias and the Calpurnias, those pattern wives and mothers of ancient Rome !

Before leaving the subject there is one remaining class of considerations which we can not well omit to touch. It may seem to be an anomaly of Christian institutions, that while women are admitted by inheritance to the highest of all political stations, in hereditary monarchies that of the throne, they are excluded from equal participation with men in the ordinary political privileges. They do not vote at elections; they do not sit in legislative bodies even where the right of membership is hereditary. Such women as Catharine of Russia, Elizabeth of England, Isabel of Spain, Maria Theresa of Hungary, might justify, it would seem, the imposition of any degree of political responsibility upon the female sex. True, but the only cases which countenance this idea are of woman exercising inherited sovereign power, in solitary examples, constituting exceptions to the usual destiny of the sex, and these exceptions, when analyzed, serving to confirm the general rule. They were not thrown into the vulgar strife and competition of honor, which necessarily pervade the ranks of ordi-

nary life. They did not have to run the career of arms as the road to power. And the condition of a great prince in the countries of Christendom is rather that of one representing sovereignty than of one actually exercising it; since all the labor and responsibility and personal danger devolve on ministers and generals holding the delegated powers of government. Aurelius, it is said, contemplated the establishment of a female senate. Heliogabalus actually did organize one under the presidency of his mother; but Ælius Lampridius, who tells the tale, says the members chiefly occupied themselves with points of etiquette, of regulation of dress, and other like *feminine mysteries of state*. And whether the story of the Amazons be authentic history, or only a cunningly devised fable, it presents at all events a poor picture of what society would become if our councils were filled and our armies *manned* with women, and they rather than men, or equally with men, discharged the external and political duties of society, doing so at the sacrifice of all that delicacy and maternal tenderness which are among the most appropriate and the highest charms of woman. Hers be the domain of the moral affections, the empire of the heart, the coequal sovereignty of intellect, taste, and social refinement; leave the rude commerce of camps and the soul-hardening struggles of political power to the harsher spirit of man, that he may still look up to her as a purer and brighter being, an emanation of some better world, irradiating like a rainbow of hope the stormy elements of life.

JOHN MILTON.*

THE discovery of the lost work of Milton, the treatise "Of the Christian Doctrine," in 1823, drew a sudden attention to his name. For a short time the literary journals were filled with disquisitions on his genius; new editions of his works and new compilations of his life were published. But the new-found book having in itself less attraction than any other work of Milton, the curiosity of the public as quickly subsided, and left the poet to the enjoyment of his permanent fame, or to such increase or abatement of it only as is incidental to a sublime genius, quite independent of the momentary challenge of universal attention to his claims.

But, if the new and temporary renown of the poet is silent again, it is nevertheless true that he has gained in this age some increase of permanent praise. The fame of a great man is not rigid and stony like his bust. It changes with time. It needs time to give it due perspective. It was very easy to remark an altered tone in the criticism when Milton reappeared as an author, fifteen years ago, from any that had been bestowed on the same subject be-

* The Poetical Works of John Milton. A new edition. 2 vols., 8vo. Boston: Hilliard, Gray & Co. 1836.

fore. It implied merit indisputable and illustrious; yet so near to the modern mind as to be still alive and life-giving. The aspect of Milton, to this generation, will be part of the history of the nineteenth century. There is no name in literature between his age and ours that rises into any approach to his own. And as a man's fame, of course, characterizes those who give it as much as him who receives it, the new criticism indicated a change in the public taste, and a change which the poet himself might claim to have wrought.

The reputation of Milton had already undergone one or two revolutions long anterior to its recent aspects. In his lifetime he was little or not at all known as a poet, but obtained great respect from his contemporaries as an accomplished scholar and a formidable controvertist. His poem fell unregarded among his countrymen. His prose writings, especially the "Defence of the English People," seem to have been read with avidity. These tracts are remarkable compositions. They are earnest, spiritual, rich with allusion, sparkling with innumerable ornaments; but as writings designed to gain a practical point they fail. They are not effective like similar productions of Swift and Burke; or, like what became also controversial tracts, several masterly speeches in the history of the American Congress. Milton seldom deigns a glance at the obstacles that are to be overcome before that which he proposes can be done. There is no attempt to conciliate—no mediate, no preparatory course suggested—but, peremptory and impassioned, he demands on the instant an ideal justice. Therein they are discriminated from modern writings, in which a regard to the actual is all but universal.

Their rhetorical excellence must also suffer some deduction. They have no perfectness. These writings are wonderful for the truth, the learning, the subtilty and pomp of the language; but the whole is sacrificed to the particular. Eager to do fit justice to each thought, he does not subordinate it so as to project the main argument. He writes while he is heated; the piece shows all the rambles and resources of indignation; but he has never *integrated* the parts of the argument in his mind. The reader is fatigued with admiration, but is not yet master of the subject.

Two of his pieces may be excepted from this description, one for its faults, the other for its excellence. The "Defence of the People of England," on which his contemporary fame was founded, is, when divested of its pure Latinity, the worst of his works. Only its general aim and a few elevated passages can save it. We could be well content if the flames to which it was condemned at Paris, at Toulouse, and at London, had utterly consumed it. The lover of his genius will always regret that he should not have taken counsel of his own lofty heart at this, as at other times, and have written from the deep convictions of love and right which are the foundations of civil liberty. There is little poetry or prophecy in this mean and ribald scolding. To insult Salmasius, not to acquit England, is the main design. What under heaven had Madame de Saumaise, or the manner of living of Saumaise, or Salmasius, or his blunders of grammar, or his niceties of diction, to do with the solemn question whether Charles Stuart had been rightly slain? Though it evinces learning and critical skill, yet, as an historical argument, it can not be valued with similar disquisitions of Robertson and Hallam, and even less celebrated

scholars. But, when he comes to speak of the reason of the thing, then he always recovers himself. The voice of the mob is silent, and Milton speaks. And the peroration in which he implores his countrymen to refute this adversary by their great deeds is in a just spirit. The other piece is his "*Areopagitica*," the discourse addressed to the Parliament in favor of removing the censorship of the press—the most splendid of his prose works. It is, as Luther said of one of Melancthon's writings, "alive, hath hands and feet—and not like Erasmus's sentences, which were made, not grown." The weight of the thought is equaled by the vivacity of the expression, and it cheers as well as teaches. This tract is far the best known and the most read of all, and is still a magazine of reasons for the freedom of the press. It is valuable in history as an argument addressed to a government to produce a practical end, and plainly presupposes a very peculiar state of society.

But deeply as that peculiar state of society, in which and for which Milton wrote, has engraved itself in the remembrance of the world, it shares the destiny which overtakes everything local and personal in nature; and the accidental facts, on which a battle of principles was fought, have already passed, or are fast passing, into oblivion. We have lost all interest in Milton as the redoubted disputant of a sect; but by his own innate worth this man has steadily risen in the world's reverence, and occupies a more imposing place in the mind of men at this hour than ever before.

It is the aspect which he presents to this generation that alone concerns us. Milton, the controvertist, has lost his popularity long ago; and, if we skip the pages of "*Paradise*

Lost " where "God the Father argues like a school divine," so did the next age to his own. But we are persuaded he kindles a love and emulation in us which he did not in foregoing generations. We think we have seen and heard criticism upon the poems which the bard himself would have more valued than the recorded praise of Dryden, Addison, and Johnson, because it came nearer to the mark; was finer and closer appreciation; the praise of intimate knowledge and delight; and, of course, more welcome to the poet than the general and vague acknowledgment of his genius by those able but unsympathizing critics. We think we have heard the recitation of his verses by genius, which found in them that which itself would say; recitation which told, in the diamond sharpness of every articulation, that now first were such perception and enjoyment possible; the perception and enjoyment of all his varied rhythm, and his perfect fusion of the classic and the English styles. This is a poet's right; for every masterpiece of art goes on for some ages reconciling the world unto itself, and despotically fashioning the public ear. The opposition to it, always greatest at first, continually decreases and at last ends; and a new race grows up in the taste and spirit of the work, with the utmost advantage for seeing intimately its power and beauty.

But it would be great injustice to Milton to consider him as enjoying merely a critical reputation. It is the prerogative of this great man to stand at this hour foremost of all men in literary history, and so (shall we not say?) of all men, in the power to *inspire*. Virtue goes out of him into others. Leaving out of view the pretensions of our contemporaries (always an incalculable influence), we think no

man can be named whose mind still acts on the cultivated intellect of England and America with an energy comparable to that of Milton. As a poet, Shakespeare undoubtedly transcends and far surpasses him in his popularity with foreign nations; but Shakespeare is a voice merely; who and what he was that sang, that sings, we know not. Milton stands erect, commanding, still visible as a man among men, and reads the laws of the moral sentiment to the newborn race. There is something pleasing in the affection with which we can regard a man who died a hundred and sixty years ago in the other hemisphere, who, in respect to personal relations, is to us as the wind, yet by an influence purely spiritual makes us jealous for his fame as for that of a near friend. He is identified in the mind with all select and holy images, with the supreme interests of the human race. If hereby we attain any more precision, we proceed to say that we think no man in these later ages, and few men ever, possessed so great a conception of the manly character. Better than any other he has discharged the office of every great man, namely, to raise the idea of man in the minds of his contemporaries and of posterity—to draw after nature a life of man, exhibiting such a composition of grace, of strength, and of virtue as poet had not described nor hero lived. Human nature in these ages is indebted to him for its best portrait. Many philosophers in England, France, and Germany have formally dedicated their study to this problem; and we think it impossible to recall one in those countries who communicates the same vibration of hope, of self-reverence, of piety, of delight in beauty which the name of Milton awakens. Lord Bacon, who has written much and with prodigious ability on this

science, shrinks and falters before the absolute and uncourtly Puritan. Bacon's "Essays" are the portrait of an ambitious and profound calculator—a great man of the vulgar sort. Of the upper world of man's being they speak few and faint words. The man of Locke is virtuous without enthusiasm, and intelligent without poetry. Addison, Pope, Hume, and Johnson, students, with very unlike temper and success, of the same subject, can not, taken together, make any pretension to the amount or the quality of Milton's inspirations. The man of Lord Chesterfield is unworthy to touch his garment's hem. Franklin's man is a frugal, inoffensive, thrifty citizen, but savors of nothing heroic. The genius of France has not, even in her best days, yet culminated in any one head—not in Rousseau, not in Pascal, not in Fénelon—into such perception of all the attributes of humanity as to entitle it to any rivalry in these lists. In Germany the greatest writers are still too recent to institute a comparison; and yet we are tempted to say that art and not life seems to be the end of their effort. But the idea of a purer existence than any he saw around him, to be realized in the life and conversation of men, inspired every act and every writing of John Milton. He defined the object of education to be, "to fit a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." He declared that "he who would aspire to write well hereafter in laudable things, bought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things, not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." Nor is there

in literature a more noble outline of a wise external education than that which he drew up at the age of thirty-six in his "Letter to Samuel Hartlib." The muscles, the nerves, and the flesh with which this skeleton is to be filled up and covered, exist in his works and must be sought there.

For the delineation of this heroic image of man, Milton enjoyed singular advantages. Perfections of body and of mind are attributed to him by his biographers, that, if the anecdotes had come down from a greater distance of time, or had not been in part furnished or corroborated by political enemies, would lead us to suspect the portraits were ideal, like the Cyrus of Xenophon, the Telemachus of Fénelon, or the popular traditions of Alfred the Great.

Handsome to a proverb, he was called the lady of his college. Aubrey says, "This harmonical and ingenuous soul dwelt in a beautiful and well-proportioned body." His manners and his carriage did him no injustice. Wood, his political opponent, relates that "his deportment was affable, his gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness." Aubrey adds a sharp trait, that "he pronounced the letter R very hard, a certain sign of a satirical genius." He had the senses of a Greek. His eye was quick, and he was accounted an excellent master of his rapier. His ear for music was so acute that he was not only enthusiastic in his love, but a skillful performer himself; and his voice, we are told, was delicately sweet and harmonious. He insists that music shall make a part of a generous education.

With these keen perceptions, he naturally received a love of nature, and a rare susceptibility to impressions from external beauty. In the midst of London, he seems, like the

creatures of the field and the forest, to have been tuned in concord with the order of the world; for he believed his poetic vein only flowed from the autumnal to the vernal equinox; and, in his essay on "Education," he doubts whether, in the fine days of spring, any study can be accomplished by young men. "In those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature, not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth." His sensibility to impressions from beauty needs no proof from his history; it shines through every page. The form and the voice of Leonora Baroni seem to have captivated him in Rome, and to her he addressed his Italian sonnets and Latin epigrams.

To these endowments it must be added that his address and his conversation were worthy of his fame. His house was resorted to by men of wit, and foreigners came to England, we are told, "to see the Lord Protector and Mr. Milton." In a letter to one of his foreign correspondents, Emeric Bigot, and in reply apparently to some compliment on his powers of conversation, he writes: "Many have been celebrated for their compositions whose common conversation and intercourse have betrayed no marks of sublimity or genius. But, as far as possible, I aim to show myself equal in thought and speech to what I have written, if I have written anything well."

These endowments received the benefit of a careful and happy discipline. His father's care, seconded by his own endeavor, introduced him to a profound skill in all the treasures of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Italian tongues; and, to enlarge and enliven his elegant learning, he was sent into

Italy, where he beheld the remains of ancient art, and the rival works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Correggio; where also he received social and academical honors from the learned and the great. In Paris he became acquainted with Grotius; in Florence or Rome with Galileo; and probably no traveler ever entered that country of history with better right to its hospitality, none upon whom its influences could have fallen more congenially.

Among the advantages of his foreign travel, Milton certainly did not count it the least that it contributed to forge and polish that great weapon of which he acquired such extraordinary mastery—his power of language. His lore of foreign tongues added daily to his consummate skill in the use of his own. No individual writer has been an equal benefactor of the English tongue by showing its capabilities. Very early in life he became conscious that he had more to say to his fellow men than they had fit words to embody. At nineteen years, in a college exercise, he addresses his native language, saying to it that it would be his choice to leave trifles for a grave argument—

“Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound;
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at heaven’s door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie.”

Michael Angelo calls “him alone an artist whose hands can execute what his mind has conceived.” The world, no doubt, contains very many of that class of men whom Wordsworth denominates “*silent poets*,” whose minds teem with

images which they want words to clothe. But Milton's mind seems to have no thought or emotion which refused to be recorded. His mastery of his native tongue was more than to use it as well as any other; he cast it into new forms. He uttered in it things unheard before. Not imitating, but rivaling Shakespeare, he scattered, in tones of prolonged and delicate melody, his pastoral and romantic fancies; then, soaring into unattempted strains, he made it capable of an unknown majesty, and bent it to express every trait of beauty, every shade of thought; and searched the kennel and jakes as well as the palaces of sound for the harsh discords of his polemic wrath. We may even apply to his performance on the instrument of language his own description of music:

“ notes, with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.”

But, while Milton was conscious of possessing this intellectual voice, penetrating through ages, and propelling its melodious undulations forward through the coming world, he knew also that this mastery of language was a secondary power, and he respected the mysterious source whence it had its spring; namely, clear conceptions and a devoted heart. “For me,” he said, in his “Apology for Smectymnus,” “although I can not say that I am utterly untrained in those rules which best rhetoricians have given, or unacquainted with those examples which the prime authors of

eloquence have written in any learned tongue, yet true eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others, when such a man would speak, his words, by what I can express, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

But, as basis or fountain of his rare physical and intellectual accomplishments, the man Milton was just and devout. He is rightly dear to mankind, because in him—among so many perverse and partial men of genius—in him humanity rights itself; the old eternal goodness finds a home in his breast, and for once shows itself beautiful. His gifts are subordinated to his moral sentiments. And his virtues are so graceful that they seem rather talents than labors. Among so many contrivances as the world has seen to make holiness ugly, in Milton at least it was so pure a flame that the foremost impression his character makes is that of elegance. The victories of the conscience in him are gained by the commanding charm which all the severe and restrictive virtues have for him. His virtues remind us of what Plutarch said of Timoleon's victories, that they resembled Homer's verses, they ran so easy and natural. His habits of living were austere. He was abstemious in diet, chaste, an early riser, and industrious. He tells us, in a Latin poem, that the lyrist may indulge in wine and in a freer life; but that he who would write an epic to the nations must eat beans and drink water. Yet in his severity is no grimace or effort. He serves from love, not from fear.

He is innocent and exact, because his taste was so pure and delicate. He acknowledges to his friend Diodati, at the age of twenty-one, that he is enamored, if ever any was, of moral perfection. "For, whatever the Deity may have bestowed upon me in other respects, he has certainly inspired me, if any ever were inspired, with a passion for the good and fair. Nor did Ceres, according to the fable, ever seek her daughter Proserpine with such unceasing solicitude as I have sought this τοῦ καλοῦ ἰδέαν, this perfect model of the beautiful in all forms and appearances of things."

When he was charged with loose habits of living, he declares that "a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem either of what I was or what I might be, and a modesty, kept me still above those low descents of mind, beneath which he must deject and plunge himself, that can agree" to such degradation.

"His mind gave him," he said, "that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath of chastity, ought to be born a knight; nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, by his counsel and his arm, to secure and protect" attempted innocence.

He states these things, he says, "to show that, though Christianity had been but slightly taught him, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition and moral discipline, learned out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep him in disdain of far less incontinences than these," that had been charged on him. In like spirit, he replies to the suspicious calumny respecting his morning haunts. "Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter, often ere the sound of any bell

awake men to labor or devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its perfect fraught; then with useful and generous labors preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations. These are the morning practices." This native honor never forsook him. It is the spirit of "Comus," the loftiest song in the praise of chastity that is in any language. It always sparkles in his eyes. It breathed itself over his decent form. It refined his amusements, which consisted in gardening, in exercise with the sword, and in playing on the organ. It engaged his interest in chivalry, in courtesy, in whatsoever savored of generosity and nobleness. This magnanimity shines in all his life. He accepts a high impulse at every risk, and deliberately undertakes the defense of the English people, when advised by his physicians that he does it at the cost of sight. There is a forbearance even in his polemics. He opens the war and strikes the first blow. When he had cut down his opponents he left the details of death and plunder to meaner partisans. He said, "he had learned the prudence of the Roman soldier, not to stand breaking of legs, when the breath was quite out of the body."

To this antique heroism Milton added the genius of the Christian sanctity. Few men could be cited who have so well understood what is peculiar in the Christian ethics, and the precise aid it has brought to men in being an emphatic affirmation of the omnipotence of spiritual laws, and,

by way of marking the contrast to vulgar opinions, laying its chief stress on humility. The indifference of a wise mind to what is called high and low, and the fact that true greatness is a perfect humility, are revelations of Christianity which Milton well understood. They give an inexhaustible truth to all his compositions. His firm grasp of this truth is his weapon against the prelates. He celebrates in the martyrs, "the irresistible might of weakness." He told the bishops that, "instead of showing the reason of their lowly condition from divine example and command, they seek to prove their high preëminence from human consent and authority." He advises that in country places, rather than to trudge many miles to a church, public worship be maintained nearer home, as in a house or barn. "For, notwithstanding the gaudy superstition of some still devoted ignorantly to temples, we may be well assured that He who disdained not to be born in a manger disdains not to be preached in a barn." And the following passage, in the "Reason of Church Government," indicates his own perception of the doctrine of humility: "Albeit, I must confess to be half in doubt whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world that I shall endanger either not to be regarded or not to be understood. For, who is there, almost, that measures wisdom by simplicity, strength by suffering, dignity by lowliness?" Obeying this sentiment, Milton deserved the apostrophe of Wordsworth:

"Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."

He laid on himself the lowliest duties. Johnson petulantly taunts Milton with "great promise and small performance" in returning from Italy because his country was in danger, and then opening a private school. Milton, wiser, felt no absurdity in this conduct. He returned into his revolutionized country, and assumed an honest and useful task by which he might serve the state daily, while he launched from time to time his formidable bolts against the enemies of liberty. He felt the heats of that "love" which "esteems no office mean." He compiled a logic for boys; he wrote a grammar; and devoted much of his time to the preparing of a Latin dictionary. But the religious sentiment warmed his writings and conduct with the highest affection of faith. The memorable covenant which in his youth—in the second book of the "Reason of Church Government"—he makes with God and his reader expressed the faith of his old age. For the first time since many ages the invocations of the Eternal Spirit in the commencement of his books are not poetic forms, but are thoughts, and so are still read with delight. His views of choice of profession and choice in marriage equally expect a divine leading.

Thus chosen by the felicity of his nature and of his breeding for the clear perception of all that is graceful and all that is great in man, Milton was not less happy in his times. His birth fell upon the agitated years when the discontents of the English Puritans were fast drawing to a head against the tyranny of the Stuarts. No period has surpassed that in the general activity of mind. It is said that no opinion, no civil, religious, moral dogma can be produced that was not broached in the fertile brain of that age. Questions that involve all social and personal rights

were hasting to be decided by the sword, and were searched by eyes to which the love of freedom, civil and religious, lent new illumination. Milton, gentle, learned, delicately bred in all the elegance of art and learning, was set down in England in the stern, almost fanatic, society of the Puritans. The part he took, the zeal of his fellowship, make us acquainted with the greatness of his spirit, as in tranquil times we could not have known it. Susceptible as Burke to the attractions of historical prescription, of royalty, of chivalry, of an ancient church illustrated by old martyrdoms and installed in cathedrals, he threw himself, the flower of elegance, on the side of the reeking conventicle, the side of humanity, but unlearned and unadorned. His muse was brave and humane, as well as sweet. He felt the dear love of native land and native language. The humanity which warms his pages begins, as it should, at home. He preferred his own English, so manlike he was, to the Latin, which contained all the treasures of his memory. "My mother bore me," he said, "a speaker of what God made mine own, and not a translator." He told the Parliament that "the imprimaturs of Lambeth House had been writ in Latin; for that our English, the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not easily find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption." At one time he meditated writing a poem on the settlement of Britain; and a history of England was one of the three main tasks which he proposed to himself. He proceeded in it no further than to the Conquest. He studied with care the character of his countrymen, and once in the "History," and once again in the "Reason of Church Government," he has recorded his judgment of the English genius.

Thus drawn into the great controversies of the times, in them he is never lost in a party. His private opinions and private conscience always distinguish him. That which drew him to the party was his love of liberty, ideal liberty; this, therefore, he could not sacrifice to any party. Toland tells us: "As he looked upon true and absolute freedom to be the greatest happiness of this life, whether to societies or single persons, so he thought constraint of any sort to be the utmost misery; for which reason he used to tell those about him the entire satisfaction of his mind, that he had constantly employed his strength and faculties in the defense of liberty, and in direct opposition to slavery." Truly he was an apostle of freedom; of freedom in the house, in the state, in the church; freedom of speech, freedom of the press, yet in his own mind discriminated from savage license, because that which he desired was the liberty of the wise man containing itself in the limits of virtue. He pushed, as far as any in that democratic age, his ideas of *civil* liberty. He proposed to establish a republic, of which the federal power was weak and loosely defined, and the substantial power should remain with primary assemblies. He maintained that a nation may try, judge, and slay their king if he be a tyrant. He pushed as far his views of *ecclesiastical* liberty. He taught the doctrine of unlimited toleration. One of his tracts is writ to prove that no power on earth can compel in matters of religion. He maintained the doctrine of *literary* liberty, denouncing the censorship of the press, and insisting that a book shall come into the world as freely as a man, so only it bear the name of author or printer, and be responsible for itself like a man. He maintained the doctrine of *domestic* liberty, or

the liberty of divorce, on the ground that unfit disposition of mind was a better reason for the act of divorce than infirmity of body, which was good ground in law. The tracts he wrote on these topics are, for the most part, as fresh and pertinent to-day as they were then. The events which produced them, the practical issues to which they tend, are mere occasions for this philanthropist to blow his trumpet for human rights. They are all varied applications of one principle, the liberty of the wise man. He sought absolute truth, not accommodating truth. His opinions on all subjects are formed for man as he ought to be—for a nation of Miltons. He would be divorced when he finds in his consort unfit disposition, knowing that he should not abuse that liberty, because with his whole heart he abhors licentiousness and loves chastity. He defends the slaying of the king, because a king is a king no longer than he governs by the laws; "it would be right to kill Philip of Spain making an inroad into England, and what right the King of Spain hath to govern us at all, the same hath the King Charles to govern tyrannically." He would remove hirelings out of the Church, and support preachers by voluntary contributions; requiring that such only should preach as have faith enough to accept so self-denying and precarious a mode of life, scorning to take thought for the aspects of prudence and expediency. The most devout man of his time, he frequented no church; probably from a disgust at the fierce spirit of the pulpits. And so, throughout all his actions and opinions, is he a consistent spiritualist, or believer in the omnipotence of spiritual laws. He wished that his writings should be communicated only to those who desired to see them. He thought nothing honest was low. He thought he could be

famous only in proportion as he enjoyed the approbation of the good. He admonished his friend "not to admire military prowess, or things in which force is of most avail. For it would not be matter of rational wonder if the wethers of our country should be born with horns that could batter down cities and towns. Learn to estimate great characters, not by the amount of animal strength, but by the habitual justice and temperance of their conduct."

Was there not a fitness in the undertaking of such a person to write a poem on the subject of Adam, the first man? By his sympathy with all nature, by the proportion of his powers, by great knowledge, and by religion, he would reascend to the height from which our nature is supposed to have descended. From a just knowledge of what man should be, he described what he was. He beholds him as he walked in Eden:

"His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

And the soul of this divine creature is excellent as his form. The tone of his thought and passion is as healthful, as even, and as vigorous as befits the new and perfect model of a race of gods.

The perception we have attributed to Milton, of a purer ideal of humanity, modifies his poetic genius. The man is paramount to the poet. His fancy is never transcendent, extravagant; but, as Bacon's imagination was said to be "the noblest that ever contented itself to minister to the

understanding," so Milton's ministers to character. Milton's sublimest song, bursting into heaven with its peals of melodious thunder, is the voice of Milton still. Indeed, throughout his poems one may see under a thin veil the opinions, the feelings, even the incidents of the poet's life, still reappearing. The sonnets are all occasional poems. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are but a finer autobiography of his youthful fancies at Harefield. The "Comus" is but a transcript in charming numbers of that philosophy of chastity which, in the "Apology for Smectymnus," and in the "Reason of Church Government," he declares to be his defense and religion. The "Samson Agonistes" is too broad an expression of his private griefs to be mistaken, and is a version of the "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce." The most affecting passages in "Paradise Lost" are personal allusions; and, when we are fairly in Eden, Adam and Milton are often difficult to be separated. Again, in "Paradise Regained," we have the most distinct marks of the progress of the poet's mind, in the revision and enlargement of his religious opinions. This may be thought to abridge his praise as a poet. It is true of Homer and Shakespeare that they do not appear in their poems; that those prodigious geniuses did cast themselves so totally into their song that their individuality vanishes, and the poet towers to the sky, while the man quite disappears. The fact is memorable. Shall we say that, in our admiration and joy in these wonderful poems, we have even a feeling of regret that the men knew not what they did; that they were too passive in their great service; were channels through which streams of thought flowed from a higher source which they did not appropriate, did not blend with

their own being. Like prophets, they seem but imperfectly aware of the import of their own utterances. We hesitate to say such things, and say them only to the unpleasing dualism, when the man and the poet show like a double consciousness. Perhaps we speak to no fact but to mere fables of an idle mendicant, Homer; and of a Shakespeare, content with a mean and jocular way of life. Be it how it may, the genius and office of Milton were different, namely, to ascend by the aids of his learning and his religion—by an equal perception, that is, of the past and the future—to a higher insight and more lively delineation of the heroic life of man. This was his poem; whereof all his indignant pamphlets and all his soaring verses are only single cantos or detached stanzas. It was plainly needful that his poetry should be a version of his own life, in order to give weight and solemnity to his thoughts, by which they might penetrate and possess the imagination and the will of mankind. The creations of Shakespeare are cast into the world of thought, to no further end than to delight. Their intrinsic beauty is their excuse for being. Milton, fired “with dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of good things into others,” tasked his giant imagination and exhausted the stores of his intellect for an end beyond, namely, to teach. His own conviction it is which gives such authority to his strain. Its reality is its force. If out of the heart it came, to the heart it must go. What schools and epochs of common rhymers would it need to make a counterbalance to the severe oracles of his muse!—

“In them is plainest taught and easiest learned,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so.”

The lover of Milton reads one sense in his prose and in his metrical compositions; and sometimes the muse soars highest in the former, because the thought is more sincere. Of his prose in general, not the style alone, but the argument also, is poetic; according to Lord Bacon's definition of poetry, following that of Aristotle, "Poetry, not finding the actual world exactly conformed to its idea of good and fair, seeks to accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind, and to create an ideal world better than the world of experience." Such certainly is the explanation of Milton's tracts. Such is the apology to be entered for the plea for freedom of divorce; an essay which, from the first until now, has brought a degree of obloquy on his name. It was a sally of the extravagant spirit of the time overjoyed, as in the French Revolution, with the sudden victories it had gained, and eager to carry on the standard of truth to new heights. It is to be regarded as a poem on one of the griefs of man's condition, namely, unfit marriage. And as many poems have been written upon unfit society, commending solitude, yet have not been proceeded against, though their end was hostile to the state, so should this receive that charity which an angelic soul suffering more keenly than others from the unavoidable evils of human life is entitled to.

We have offered no apology for expanding to such length our commentary on the character of John Milton, who, in old age, in solitude, in neglect, and blind, wrote the "*Paradise Lost*"—a man whom labor or danger never deterred from whatever efforts a love of the supreme interests of man prompted. For are we not the better; are not all men fortified by the remembrance of the bravery, the purity, the

temperance, the toil, the independence, and the angelic devotion of this man, who, in a revolutionary age, taking counsel only of himself, endeavored in his writings and in his life to carry out the life of man to new heights of spiritual grace and dignity, without any abatement of its strength?

THE
LAST MOMENTS OF EMINENT MEN.

"LIFE," says Sir William Temple, "is like wine; he who would drink it pure must not drain it to the dregs." "I do not wish," Byron would say, "to live to become old." The expression of the ancient poet, "that to die young is a boon of Heaven to its favorites," was repeatedly quoted by him with approbation. The certainty of a speedy release he would call the only relief against burdens which could not be borne were they not of very limited duration.

But the general sentiment of mankind declares length of days to be desirable. After an active and successful career, the repose of decline is serene and cheerful. By common consent gray hairs are a crown of glory; the only object of respect that can never excite envy. The hour of evening is not necessarily overcast; and the aged man, exchanging the pursuits of ambition for the quiet of observation, the strife of public discussion for the diffuse but instructive language of experience, passes to the grave amid grateful recollections and the tranquil enjoyment of satisfied desires.

The happy, it is agreed by all, are afraid to contemplate their end; the unhappy, it has been said, look forward to it as a release from suffering. "I think of death often,"

said a distinguished but dissatisfied man; "and I view it as a refuge. There is something calm and soothing to me in the thought; and the only time that I feel repugnance to it is on a fine day, in solitude, in a beautiful country, when all nature seems rejoicing in light and life."

This is the language of self-delusion. Numerous as may be the causes for disgust with life, its close is never contemplated with carelessness. Religion may elevate the soul to a sublime reliance on a future existence; nothing else can do it. The love of honor may brave danger; the passion of melancholy may indulge an aversion to continued being; philosophy may take its last rest with composure; the sense of shame may conduct to fortitude; yet they who would disregard the grave must turn their thoughts from the consideration of its terrors. It is an impulse of nature to strive to preserve our being; and the longing can not be eradicated. The mind may shun the contemplation of horrors; it may fortify itself by refusing to observe the nearness or the extent of the impending evil; but the instinct of life is stubborn; and he who looks directly at its termination and professes indifference is a hypocrite or is self-deceived. He that calls boldly upon Death is sure to be dismayed on finding him near. The oldest are never so old, but they desire life for one day longer; the child looks to its parent as if to discern a glimpse of hope; even the infant, as it exhales its breath, springs from its pillow to meet its mother as if there were help where there is love.

There is a story told of one of the favorite marshals of Napoleon, who, in a battle in the south of Germany, was struck by a cannon-ball, and so severely wounded that there was no possibility of a respite. Summoning the surgeon,

he ordered his wounds to be dressed ; and, when aid was declared to be unavailing, the dying officer clamorously demanded that Napoleon should be sent for, as one who had power to stop the effusion of blood, and awe nature itself into submission. Life expired amid maledictions and threats heaped upon the innocent surgeon. This foolish frenzy may have appeared like blasphemy ; it was but the uncontrolled outbreak of the instinct of self-preservation, in a rough and undisciplined mind.

Even in men of strong religious convictions, the end is not always met with serenity ; and the preacher and philosopher sometimes express an apprehension which can not be pacified. The celebrated British moralist, Samuel Johnson, was the instructor of his age ; his works are full of the austere lessons of reflecting wisdom. It might have been supposed that religion would have reconciled him to the decree of Providence ; that philosophy would have taught him to acquiesce in a necessary issue ; that science would have inspired him with confidence in the skill of his medical attendants. And yet it was not so. A sullen gloom overclouded his faculties ; he could not summon resolution to tranquilize his emotions ; and, in the absence of his attendants, he gashed himself with ghastly and debilitating wounds, as if the blind lacerations of his misguided arm could prolong the moments of an existence which the best physicians of London declared to be numbered.

“ Is there anything on earth I can do for you ? ” said Taylor to Wolcott, known as Peter Pindar, as he lay on his death-bed. “ Give me back my youth,” were the last words of the satirical buffoon.

If Johnson could hope for relief from self-inflicted

wounds, if the poet could prefer to his friend the useless prayer for a restoration of youth, we may readily believe what historians relate to us of the end of Louis XI. of France, a monarch who was not destitute of eminent qualities as well as repulsive vices ; possessing courage, a knowledge of men and of business, an indomitable will, a disposition favorable to the administration of justice among his subjects ; viewing impunity in wrong as exclusively a royal prerogative. Remorse, fear, a consciousness of being detected, disgust with life and horror of death—these were the sentiments which troubled the sick-couch of the absolute king. The first of his line who bore the epithet of “the most Christian,” he was so abandoned to egotism that he allowed the veins of children to be opened, and greedily drank their blood ; believing, with physicians of that day, that it would renovate his youth, or at least check the decay of nature. The cruelty was useless. At last, feeling the approach of death to be certain, he sent for an anchorite from Calabria, since revered as St. Francis de Paula ; and, when the hermit arrived, the monarch of France entreated him to spare his life. He threw himself at the feet of the man who was believed to derive healing virtues from the sanctity of his character ; he begged the intercession of his prayers ; he wept, he supplicated, he hoped that the voice of a Calabrian monk would reverse the order of nature, and successfully plead for his respite.

We find the love of life still more strongly acknowledged by an English poet, who, after describing our being as the dream of a shadow, “a weak-built isthmus between two eternities, so frail that it can sustain neither wind nor wave,” yet avows his preference of a few days’, nay, of a few hours’

longer residence upon earth, to all the fame which poetry can achieve.

“Fain would I see that prodigal,
Who his to-morrow would bestow,
For all old Homer’s life, e’er since he died, till now.”

We do not believe the poet sincere, for one passion may prevail over another, and in many a breast the love of fame is at times, if not always, the strongest. But if those who pass their lives in a struggle for glory may desire the attainment of their object at any price, the competitors for political power are apt to cling fast to the scene of their rivalry. Lord Castlereagh could indeed commit suicide; but it was not from disgust; his mind dwelt on the precarious condition of his own elevation, and the unsuccessful policy in which he had involved his country. He did not love death; he did not contemplate it with indifference; he failed to observe its terrors, because his attention was absorbed by apprehensions which pressed themselves upon him with unrelenting force.

The ship of the Marquis of Badajoz, Viceroy of Peru, was set on fire by Captain Stayner. The Marchioness, and her daughter, who was betrothed to the Duke of Medina-Celi, swooned in the flames, and could not be rescued. The Marquis resigned himself also to die, rather than survive with the memory of such horrors. It was not that he was careless of life; the natural feelings remained unchanged; the love of grandeur, the pride of opulence and dominion; but he preferred death, because that was out of sight, and would rescue him from the presence of absorbing and intolerable sorrows.

Madame de Sévigné, in her charming letters, gives the

true sensations of the ambitious man when suddenly called to leave the scenes of his efforts and his triumphs. Rumor, with its wonted credulity, ascribed to Louvois, the powerful minister of Louis XIV., the crime of suicide. His death was sudden, but not by his own arm; he fell a victim, if not to disease, to the revenge of a woman. In a night the most energetic, reckless statesman in Europe, passionately fond of place, extending his influence to every cabinet, and embracing in his views the destiny of continents, was called away. How much business was arrested in progress! how many projects defeated! how many secrets buried in the silence of the grave! Who should disentangle the interests which his policy had rendered complicate? Who should terminate the wars which he had begun? Who should follow up the blows which he had aimed? Well might he have exclaimed to the angel of death: "Ah, grant me a short reprieve; spare me till I can check the Duke of Savoy; checkmate the Prince of Orange!"—"No! no! You shall not have a single, single minute." Death is as inexorable to the prayer of ambition as to the entreaty of despair. The ruins of the Palatinate, the wrongs of the Huguenots, were to be avenged; and Louvois, like Louis XI. and like the rest of mankind, was to learn that the passion for life, whether expressed in the language of superstition, of abject despondency, or of the desire of continued power, could not prolong existence for a moment.

But, though the love of life may be declared a universal instinct, it does not follow that death is usually met with abjectness. It belongs to virtue and to manliness to accept the inevitable decree with firmness. It is often sought voluntarily, but even then the latent passion is discernible. A

sense of shame, a desire of plunder, a hope of emolument—these, not less than a sense of duty, are motives sufficient to influence men to defy all danger; yet the feeling for self-preservation does not cease to exert its power. The common hireling soldier contracts to expose himself to the deadly fire of a hostile army whenever his employers may command it; he does it, in a controversy of which he knows not the merits, for a party to which he is essentially indifferent, for purposes which, perhaps, if his mind were enlightened, he would labor to counteract. The life of the soldier is a life of contrast; of labor and idleness; it is a course of routine, easy to be endured, and leading only at intervals to exposure. The love of ease, the certainty of obtaining the means of existence, the remoteness of peril, conspire to tempt adventurers, and the armies of Europe have never suffered from any other limit than the wants of the treasury. But the same soldier would fly precipitately from any hazard which he had not bargained to encounter. The merchant will visit the deadliest climates in pursuit of gain; he will pass over regions where the air is known to be corrupt, and disease to have anchored itself in the hot, heavy atmosphere. And this he will attempt repeatedly, and with firmness, in defiance of the crowds of corpses which he may see carried by wagon-loads to the graveyards. But the same merchant would be struck by panic and desert his own residence in a more favored clime, should it be invaded by epidemic disease. He who would fearlessly meet the worst forms of a storm at sea, and take his chance of escaping the fever as he passed through New Orleans, would shun New York in the season of the cholera, and shrink from any danger which was novel and unexpected. The widows of India ascend

the funeral-pile with a fortitude which man could never display, and emulously yield up their lives to a barbarous usage which, if men had been called upon to endure it, would never have been perpetuated. Yet is it to be supposed that these unhappy victims are indifferent to the charms of existence, or blind to the terrors of its extinction? Calmly as they may lay themselves upon the pyre, they would beg for mercy were their execution to be demanded in any other way; they would confess their fear were it not that love and honor and custom confirm their doom.

No class of men in the regular discharge of duty incur danger more frequently than the honest physician. There is no type of malignant maladies with which he fails to become acquainted, no hospital so crowded with contagion that he dares not walk freely through its wards. His vocation is among the sick and the dying; he is the familiar friend of those who are sinking under infectious disease; and he never shrinks from the horror of observing it under all its aspects. He must do so with equanimity; as he inhales the poisoned atmosphere, he must coolly reflect on the medicines which may mitigate the sufferings that he can not remedy. Nay, after death has ensued, he must search with the dissecting-knife for its hidden cause, if so by multiplying his own perils he may discover some alleviation for the afflictions of others. And why is this? Because the physician is indifferent to death? Because he is steeled and hardened against the fear of it? Because he despises or pretends to despise it? By no means. It is his especial business to value life, to cherish the least spark of animated existence. And the habit of caring for the lives of his fellow men is far from leading him to an habitual indiffer-

ence to his own. The physician shuns every danger but such as the glory of his profession commands him to defy.

Thus we are led to explain the anomaly of suicide, and reconcile the apparent contradiction of a terror of death, which is yet voluntarily encountered. It may seem a paradox; but the dread of dying has itself sometimes prompted suicide, and the man who seeks to destroy himself, at the very moment of perpetrating his crime betrays the passion for life. Menace him with death under a different form from that which he has chosen, and, like other men, he will get out of its way. He will defend himself against the assassin, though he might be ready to cut his own throat; he will, if at sea, and the ship were sinking in a storm, labor with his whole strength to save it from going down, even if he had formed the design to leap into the ocean in the first moment of a calm. Place him in the van of an army, it is by no means certain that he will not prove a coward; tell him the cholera is about to rage, and he will deluge himself with preventive remedies; send him to a house visited with yellow fever, and he will steep himself in vinegar and carry with him an atmosphere of camphor. It is only under the one form, which the mind in some insane excitement may have chosen, that he preserves the desire to leave the world.

It will not be difficult, then, to set a right value on the declaration of those who profess to regard death not with indifference merely but with contempt. It is pure affectation, or the indulgence of a vulgar levity; and must excite either compassion or disgust, according as it is marked by the spirit of fiendish scoffing or of human vanity and self-deception. A French moralist tells us of a valet who danced merrily on the scaffold, where he was to be broken on the

wheel. A New England woman, belonging to a family which esteemed itself one of the first, was convicted of aiding her paramour to kill her husband. She was a complete sensualist, one to whom life was everything, and the loss of it the total shipwreck of everything. On her way to the place of execution she was accompanied by a clergyman of no very great ability; and all along the road, with the gallows in plain sight, she amused herself in teasing the good man, whose wits were no match for her raillery. He had been buying a new chaise, quite an event in the life of a humble country pastor, and when he spoke of the next world she would amuse herself in praising his purchase. If he deplored her fate and her prospects, she would grieve at his exposure to the inclement weather, and laughed and chatted as if she had been driving to a wedding and not to her own funeral. And why was this? Because death was not feared? No; but because death *was* feared, and feared intensely. The Eastern women, who are burned alive with their deceased husbands, often utter shrieks that would pierce the hearers to the soul; and, to prevent a compassion which would endanger the reign of superstition, the priests, with drums and cymbals, drown the terrific cries of their victims. So it is with those who go to the court of the King of Terrors with merriment on their lips. They dread his presence, and they seek to drown the noise of his approaching footsteps by the sound of their own ribaldry. If the scaffold often rings with a jest, it is because the mind shrinks from the solemnity of the impending change.

Perhaps the most common device for averting contemplation from death itself is, in directing it to the manner of dying. *Vanitas vanitatum!* Vanity does not give up its

hold on the last hour. Men wish to die with distinction, to be buried in state; and the last thoughts are employed on the decorum of the moment, or in the anticipation of funeral splendors. It was no uncommon thing among the Romans for a rich man to appoint an heir, on condition that his obsequies should be celebrated with costly pomp. "When I am dead," said an Indian chief, who fell into his last sleep at Washington—"when I am dead let the big guns be fired over me." The words were thought worthy of being engraved on his tomb; but they are no more than a plain expression of a very common passion; the same which leads the humblest to desire that at least a stone may be placed at the head of his grave, and demands the erection of splendid mausoleums and costly tombs for the mistaken men—

"Who by the proofs of death pretend to live."

Among the ancients, an opulent man, while yet in health, would order his own sarcophagus; and nowadays the wealthy sometimes build their own tombs, for the sake of securing a satisfactory monument. A vain man, who had done this at a great expense, showed his motive so plainly that his neighbors laughed with the sexton of the parish, who wished that the builder might not be kept long out of the interest of his money.

But it is not merely in the decorations of the grave that vanity is displayed. Saladin, in his last illness, instead of his usual standard, ordered his shroud to be uplifted in front of his tent; and the herald, who hung out this winding-sheet as a flag, was commanded to exclaim aloud: "Behold! this is all which Saladin, the vanquisher of the East, carries away of all his conquests." He was wrong there. He came naked

into the world, and he left it naked. Grave-clothes were a superfluous luxury, and, to the person receiving them, as barren of comfort as his scepter or his scimitar. Saladin was vain. He sought in dying to contrast the power he had enjoyed with the feebleness of his condition; to pass from the world in a striking antithesis; to make his death-scene an epigram. All was vanity.

A century ago it was the fashion for culprits to appear on the scaffold in the dress of dandies. Some centuries before it was the privilege of noblemen, if they merited hanging, to escape the gallows and perish on the block. The Syrian priests had foretold to the emperor Helio-gabalus that he would be reduced to the necessity of committing suicide; believing them true prophets, he kept in readiness silken cords and a sword of gold. Admirable privilege of the nobility, to be beheaded instead of hanged! Envidable prerogative of imperial dignity, to be strangled with a knot of silk or to be assassinated with a golden sword!

“ ‘Odious! in woolen! ‘twould a saint provoke’
 (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke).
 ‘No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
 Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face;
 One would not sure be frightful when one’s dead,
 And—Betty—give this cheek a little red.’ ”

The example chosen by the poet extended to appearances after death; for the presence of the same weakness in the hour of mortality we must look to the precincts of courts, where folly used to reign by prescriptive right; where caprice gives law and pleasures consume life. There

you may witness the harlot's euthanasia. The French court was at Choisy when Madame de Pompadour felt the pangs of a fatal malady. It had been the established etiquette that none but princes and persons of royal blood should breathe their last in Versailles. Proclaim to the gay circles of Paris that a thing new and unheard-of is to be permitted! Announce to the world that the rules of palace propriety and Bourbon decorum are to be broken! that the chambers where vice had fearlessly lived and laughed, but never been permitted to expire, were to admit the novel spectacle of the King's favorite mistress struggling with death!

The Marchioness questioned the physicians firmly; she perceived their hesitation; she saw the hand that beckoned her away; and she determined, says the historian, to depart in the pomp of a queen. Louis XV., himself not capable of a strong emotion, was yet willing to concede to his dying friend the consolation which she coveted, the opportunity to reign till her parting gasp. The courtiers thronged round the death-bed of a woman who distributed favors with the last exhalations of her breath; and the King hurried to name to public offices the persons whom her faltering accents recommended. Her sick-room became a scene of state; the princes and grandees still entered to pay their homage to the woman whose power did not yield to mortal disease, and were surprised to find her richly attired. The traces of death in her countenance were concealed by rouge. She reclined on a splendid couch; questions of public policy were discussed by ministers in her presence; she gloried in holding to the end the reins of the kingdom in her hands. Even a sycophant clergy showed respect to

the expiring favorite, and felt no shame at sanctioning with their frequent visits the vices of a woman who had entered the palace only as an adulteress. Having complied with the rites of the Roman Church, she next sought the approbation of the philosophers. She lisped no word of penitence; she shed no tears of regret. The Curate left her as she was in the agony. "Wait a moment," said she; "we will leave the house together."

The dying mistress was worshiped while she breathed; hardly was she dead when the scene changed: two domestics carried out her body on a hand-barrow from the palace to her private home. The King stood at the window looking at the clouds as her remains were carried by. "The Marchioness," said he, "will have bad weather on her journey."

The flickering lamp blazes with unusual brightness just as it goes out. "The fit gives vigor, as it destroys." He who has but a moment remaining is released from the common motives for dissimulation; and Time, that lays his hand on everything else, destroying beauty, undermining health, and wasting the powers of life, spares the ruling passion, which is connected with the soul itself. That passion

". . . sticks to our last sand.

Consistent in our follies and our sins,

Here honest Nature ends as she begins."

Napoleon expired during the raging of a whirlwind, and his last words showed that his thoughts were in the battlefield. The meritorious author of the "*Memoir of Cabot*," a work which in accuracy and in extensive research is very far superior to most late treatises on maritime discovery,

tells us that the discoverer of our continent, in an hallucination before his death, believed himself again on the ocean, once more steering in quest of adventure over waves which knew him as the steed knows its rider. How many a gentle eye has been dimmed with tears as it read the fabled fate of Fergus MacIvor! Not inferior to the admirable hero of the romance was the Marquis of Montrose, who had fought for the Stuarts and fell into the hands of the Presbyterians. His head and his limbs were ordered to be severed from his body, and to be hanged on the Tolbooth in Edinburgh and in other public towns of the kingdom. He listened to the sentence with the pride of loyalty and the fierce anger of a generous defiance. "I wish," he exclaimed, "I had flesh enough to be sent to every city in Christendom, as a testimony to the cause for which I suffer."

But let us take an example of sublimer virtue, such as we find in a statesman who lived without a stain from youth to maturity, and displayed an unwavering consistency to the last; a hero in civil life, who was in some degree our own. It becomes America to take part in rescuing from undeserved censure the names and the memory of victims to the unconquerable love of republican liberty.

"Vane, young in years, in counsel old : to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou'st learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe ;
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son."

He that would discern the difference between magnanimous genius and a shallow wit may compare this splendid

eulogy of Milton with the superficial levity in the commentary of Warton. It is a fashion to call Sir Henry Vane a fanatic. And what is fanaticism? True, he was a rigid Calvinist. True, he has written an obscure book on the mystery of godliness, of which all that we understand is excellent, and we may therefore infer that the vein of the rest is good. But does this prove him a fanatic? If to be the uncompromising defender of civil and religious liberty be fanaticism; if to forgive injuries be fanaticism; if to believe that the mercy of God extends to all his creatures, and may reach even the angels of darkness, be fanaticism; if to have earnestly supported in the Long Parliament the freedom of conscience; if to have repeatedly, boldly, and zealously interposed to check the persecution of Roman Catholics; if to have labored that the sect which he least approved should enjoy their property in security and be safe from all penal enactments for nonconformity; if in his public life to have pursued a career of firm, conscientious, disinterested consistency, never wavering, never trimming, never changing—if all this be fanaticism, then was Sir Harry Vane a fanatic. Not otherwise. The people of Massachusetts declined to continue him in office; and when his power in England was great, he requited the colony with the benefits of his favoring influence. He resisted the arbitrariness of Charles I., but would not sit as one of his judges. He opposed the tyranny of Cromwell. When that extraordinary man entered the House of Commons to break up the Parliament which was about to pass laws that would have endangered his supremacy, Vane rebuked him for his purpose of treason. When the musketeers invaded the hall of debate, and others were silent, Vane exclaimed to the most

despotic man in Europe : "This is not honest. It is against morality and common honesty." Well might Cromwell, since his designs were criminal, reply : "Sir Henry Vane ! Sir Henry Vane ! The Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane !"

Though Vane suffered from the usurpation of the Protector, he lived to see the Restoration. On the return of the Stuarts, like Lafayette among the Bourbons, he remained the stanch enemy of tyranny. The austere patriot whom Cromwell had feared struck terror into the hearts of a faithless and licentious court. It was resolved to destroy him. In a different age or country the poisoned cup, or the knife of the assassin, might have been used ; in that season of corrupt influence a judicial murder was resolved upon. His death was a deliberate crime, contrary to the royal promise ; contrary to the express vote of "the healing Parliament" ; contrary to law, to equity, to the evidence. But it suited the designs of a monarch who feared to be watched by a statesman of incorruptible elevation of character. The night before his execution he enjoyed the society of his family as if he had been reposing in his own mansion. The next morning he was beheaded. The least concession would have saved him. If he had only consented to deny the supremacy of Parliament the King would have restrained the malignity of his hatred. "Ten thousand deaths for me," exclaimed Vane, "ere I will stain the purity of my conscience." Historians report that life was dear to him ; he submitted to his end with the firmness of a patriot, the serenity of a Christian.

" ' I give and I devise ' (old Euclio said,
And sighed) ' my lands and tenements to Ned.'

‘Your money, sir?’ ‘My money, sir! what, all?’

‘Why, if I must’ (then wept), ‘I give it Paul.’

‘The manor, sir?’ ‘The manor! hold,’ he cried,

‘Not that—I can not part with that’—and died.”

Lorenzo de’ Medici, upon his death-bed, sent for Savonarola to receive his confession and grant him absolution. The severe anchorite questioned the dying sinner with unsparing rigor. “Do you believe entirely in the mercy of God?” “Yes, I feel it in my heart.” “Are you truly ready to restore all the possessions and estates which you have unjustly acquired?” The dying Duke hesitated; he counted up in his mind the sums which he had hoarded; delusion whispered that nearly all had been so honestly gained that the sternest censor would strike but little from his opulence. The pains of hell were threatened if he denied, and he gathered courage to reply that he was ready to make restitution. Once more the unyielding priest resumed his inquisition. “Will you resign the sovereignty of Florence, and restore the democracy of the republic?” Lorenzo, like Macbeth, had acquired a crown; but, unlike Macbeth, he saw sons of his own about to become his successors. He gloried in the hope of being the father of princes, the founder of a line of hereditary sovereigns. Should he crush this brilliant expectation and tremble at the wild words of a visionary? Should he who had reigned as a monarch stoop to die as a merchant? No! though hell itself were opening beneath his bed. “Not that! I can not part with that.” Savonarola left his bedside with indignation, and Lorenzo died without shrift.

“And you, brave Cobham, to the latest breath,
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death,

Such in those moments, as in all the past—

‘Oh, save my country, Heaven!’ shall be your last.”

Like this was the exclamation of the patriot Quincy, whose virtues have been fitly commemorated by the pious reverence of his son. The celebrated Admiral Blake breathed his last as he came in sight of England, happy in at least desecrating the land of which he had advanced the glory by his brilliant victories. Quincy died as he approached the coast of Massachusetts. He loved his family; but at that moment he gave his whole soul to the cause of freedom. “Oh, that I might live”—it was his dying wish—“to render to my country one last service!”

The coward falls panic-stricken; the superstitious man dies with visions of terror floating before his fancy. It has even happened that a man has been in such dread of eternal woe as to cut his throat in his despair. The phenomenon seems strange; but the fact is unquestionable. The giddy, that are near a precipice, totter toward the brink which they would shun. Everybody remembers the atheism and bald sensuality of the septuagenarian Alexander VI.; and the name of his natural son, Cæsar Borgia, is a proverb, as a synonym for the most vicious selfishness. Let one tale, of which Macchiavelli attests the truth, set forth the deep baseness of a cowardly nature. Borgia had, by the most solemn oaths, induced the Duke of Gravina, Oliverotto, Vitellozzo Vitelli, and another, to meet him in Sinigaglia, for the purpose of forming a treaty, and then issued the order for the massacre of Oliverotto and Vitelli. Can it be believed? Vitelli, as he expired, begged of the infamous Borgia, his assassin, to obtain of Alexander a dispensation for his omissions, a release from purgatory.

The death-bed of Cromwell himself was not free from superstition. When near his end, he asked if the elect could never fall. "Never," replied Godwin the preacher. "Then I am safe," said the man whose last years had been stained by cruelty and tyranny; "for I am sure I was once in a state of grace."

Ximenes languished from disappointment at the loss of power and the want of royal favor. A smile from Louis would have cheered the death-bed of Racine.

In a brave mind the love of honor endures to the last. "Don't give up the ship!" cried Lawrence, as his life-blood was flowing in torrents. Abimelech groaned that he fell ignobly by the hand of a woman. We have ever admired the gallant death of Sir Richard Grenville, who, in a single ship, encountered a numerous fleet; and, when mortally wounded, husbanded his strength till he could summon his victors to bear testimony to his courage and his patriotism. "Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyous and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, fighting for his country, queen, religion, and honor."

The public has been instructed through the press in the details of the treason of Benedict Arnold, by an inquirer, who has compassed earth and sea in search of historic truth, and has merited the applause of his country, not less for candor and judgment, than for diligence and ability. The victim of the intrigue was André. The mind of the young soldier revolted at the service of treachery in which he had become involved, and, holding a stain upon honor to be worse than the forfeiture of life, he shuddered at the sight of the gallows, but not at the thought of dying. He felt the same sentiment which made death welcome to Nelson and

to Wolfe, to whom it came with glory and victory for its companions; but for André the keen sense of honor added bitterness to the cup of affliction by exciting fear lest the world should take the manner of his execution as evidence of merited opprobrium.

Finally: he who has a good conscience and a well-balanced mind meets death with calmness, resignation, and hope. Saint Louis died among the ruins of Carthage—a Christian king, laboring in vain to expel the religion of Mohammed from the spot where Dido had planted the gods of Syria. “My friends,” said he, “I have finished my course. Do not mourn for me. It is natural that I, as your chief and leader, should go before you. You must follow me. Keep yourselves in readiness for the journey.” Then, giving his son his blessing and the best advice, he received the sacrament, closed his eyes, and died as he was repeating from the Psalms: “I will come into thy house; I will worship in thy holy temple.”

The Curate of St. Sulpice asked the confessor who had shrived Montesquieu on his death-bed if the penitent had given satisfaction. “Yes,” replied Father Roust, “like a man of genius.” The Curate was displeased; unwilling to leave the dying man a moment of tranquillity, he addressed him, “Sir, are you truly conscious of the greatness of God?” “Yes,” said the departing philosopher, “and of the littleness of man.”

How calm were the last moments of Cuvier! Benevolence of feeling and self-possession diffused serenity round the hour of his passing away. Confident that the hand of death was upon him, he yet submitted to the application of remedies, that he might gratify his more hopeful friends.

They had recourse to leeches ; and with delightful simplicity the great naturalist observed, *it was he who had discovered that leeches possess red blood.* The discovery, which he made in his youth, had been communicated to the public in the memoir that first gained him celebrity. The thoughts of the dying naturalist recurred to the scenes of his early life, to the coast of Normandy, where, in the solitude of conscious genius, he had roamed by the side of the ocean, and achieved fame by observing the wonders of animal life which are nourished in its depths. He remembered his years of poverty, the sullen rejection which his first claims for advancement had received, and all the vicissitudes through which he had been led to the highest distinctions in science. The son of the Würtemberg soldier, of too feeble a frame to embrace the profession of his father, had found his way to the secrets of nature. The man who, in his own province, had been refused the means of becoming the village pastor of an ignorant peasantry, had succeeded in charming the most polished circles of Paris by the clearness of his descriptions, and commanding the attention of the Deputies of France by the grace and fluency of his elocution. And now he was calmly predicting his departure ; his respiration became rapid, and his head fell as if he were in meditation. Thus his soul passed to its Creator without a struggle. "Those who entered afterward would have thought that the noble old man, seated in his arm-chair by the fireplace, was asleep, and would have walked softly across the room for fear of disturbing him." Heaven had but "recalled its own."

The death of Haller himself was equally tranquil. When its hour approached, he watched the ebbing of life and con-

tinued to observe the beating of his pulse till sensation was gone.

A tranquil death becomes the man of science, or the scholar. He should cultivate letters to the last moment of life ; he should resign public honors as calmly as one would take off a domino on returning from a mask. He should listen to the signal for his departure, not with exultation, and not with indifference. Respecting the dread solemnity of the change, and reposing in hope on the bosom of death, he should pass, without boldness and without fear, from the struggles of inquiry to the certainty of knowledge; from a world of doubt to a world of truth.

*PETER THE GREAT.**

ONE day, in the year 1697, the great Duke of Marlborough happened to be in the village of Saardam. He visited the dockyard of one Mynheer Calf, a rich ship-builder, and was struck with the appearance of a journeyman at work there. He was a large, powerful man, dressed in a red woolen shirt and duck trousers, with a sailor's hat, and seated, with an adze in his hand, upon a rough log of timber which lay on the ground. The man's features were bold and regular, his dark brown hair fell in natural curls about his neck, his complexion was strong and ruddy, with veins somewhat distended, indicating an ardent temperament and more luxurious habits than comported with his station; and his dark, keen eye glanced from one object to another with remarkable restlessness. He was engaged in earnest conversation with some strangers, whose remarks he occasionally interrupted, while he rapidly addressed them in a guttural but not unmusical voice. As he became occasionally excited in conversation, his features

* 1. *La Russie en 1839.* Par le Marquis de Custine. 4 vols. Seconde édition, revue, corrigée, et augmentée. Paris. 1843.

2. *A Memoir of the Life of Peter the Great.* By John Barrow, Esq., Secretary to the Admiralty. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1839.

twitched convulsively, the blood rushed to his forehead, his arms were tossed about with extreme violence of gesticulation, and he seemed constantly upon the point of giving way to some explosion of passion, or else of falling into a fit of catalepsy. His companions, however, did not appear alarmed by his vehemence, although they seemed to treat him with remarkable deference; and, after a short time, his distorted features would resume their symmetry and agreeable expression, his momentary frenzy would subside, and a bright smile would light up his whole countenance.

The Duke inquired the name of this workman, and was told it was one Pieter Baas, a foreign journeyman of remarkable mechanical abilities and great industry. Approaching, he entered into some slight conversation with him upon matters pertaining to his craft. While they were conversing a stranger of foreign mien and costume appeared, holding a voluminous letter in his hand; the workman started up, snatched it from his hand, tore off the seals and greedily devoured its contents, while the stately Marlborough walked away unnoticed. The Duke was well aware that, in this thin disguise, he saw the Czar of Muscovy. Pieter Baas, or Boss Peter, or Master Peter, was Peter the despot of all the Russias, a man who, having just found himself the undisputed proprietor of a quarter of the globe with all its inhabitants, had opened his eyes to the responsibilities of his position, and had voluntarily descended from his throne for the noble purpose of qualifying himself to reascend it.

The empire of Russia, at this moment more than twice as large as Europe, having a considerable extent of seacoasts, with flourishing commercial havens both upon the Baltic and the Black Seas, and a chain of internal communication,

by canal and river, connecting them both with the Caspian and the Volga, was at the accession of Peter I. of quite sufficient dimensions for any reasonable monarch's ambition, but of most unfortunate geographical position. Shut off from civilized western Europe by vast and thinly peopled forests and plains, having for neighbors only "the sledged Polack," the Turk, the Persian, and the Chinese, and touching nowhere upon the ocean, that great highway of civilization—the ancient empire of the Czars seemed always in a state of suffocation. Remote from the sea, it was a mammoth without lungs, incapable of performing the functions belonging to its vast organization, and presenting to the world the appearance of a huge, incomplete, and inert mass, waiting the advent of some new Prometheus to inspire it with life and light.

Its capital, the *bizarre* and fantastic Moscow, with its vast, turreted, and venerable Kremlin—its countless churches, with their flashing spires and clustering and turbaned minarets glittering in green, purple, and gold; its mosques, with the cross supplanting the crescent; its streets swarming with bearded merchants and ferocious Janizaries, while its female population were immured and invisible—was a true type of the empire, rather Asiatic than European, and yet compounded of both.

The government, too, was far more Oriental than European in its character. The Normans had, to be sure, in the eleventh century taken possession of the Russian government with the same gentlemanlike effrontery with which, at about the same time, they had seated themselves upon every throne in Europe; and the crown of Ruric had been transmitted like the other European crowns for many gen-

erations, till it descended through a female branch upon the head of the Romanoffs, the ancestors of Peter and the present imperial family. But though there might be said to be an established dynasty, the succession to the throne was controlled by the Strelitzes, the licentious and ungovernable soldiery of the capital, as much as the Turkish or Roman Empire by the Janizaries or pretorians; and the history of the government was but a series of palace-revolutions, in which the sovereign, the tool alternately of the priesthood and the body-guard, was elevated, deposed, or strangled, according to the prevalence of different factions in the capital. The government was in fact, as it has been epigrammatically characterized, "a despotism tempered by assassination."

The father of Peter I., Alexis Michaelovitch, had indeed projected reforms in various departments of the government. He seems to have been, to a certain extent, aware of the capacity of his empire, and to have had some faint glimmerings of the responsibility which weighed upon him, as the inheritor of this vast hereditary estate. He undertook certain revisions of the laws, if the mass of contradictory and capricious edicts which formed the code deserve that name; and his attention had particularly directed itself to the condition of the army and the church. Upon his death, in 1677, he left two sons, Theodore and John, and four daughters, by his first wife; besides one son, Peter, born in 1672, and one daughter, Natalia, by the second wife, of the house of Narischkin. The eldest son, Theodore, succeeded, whose administration was directed by his sister, the ambitious and intriguing Princess Sophia, assisted by her paramour Galitzin.

Theodore died in 1682, having named his half-brother Peter as his successor, to the exclusion of his own brother John, who was almost an idiot. Sophia, who, in the fitful and perilous history of Peter's boyhood, seems like the wicked fairy in so many Eastern fables, whose mission is constantly to perplex, and if possible destroy, the virtuous young prince, who, however, struggles manfully against her enchantments and her hosts of allies, and comes out triumphant at last—Sophia, assisted by Couvanski, general of the Strelitzes, excited a tumult in the capital. Artfully inflaming the passions of the soldiery, she directed their violence against all those who stood between her and the power she aimed at; many of the Narischkin family (the maternal relatives of Peter), with their adherents, were butchered with wholesale ferocity; many crown-officers were put to death; and the Princess at length succeeded in proclaiming the idiot John and the infant Peter as joint Czars, and herself as regent.

From this time forth Sophia, having the reins of government securely in her hand, took particular care to surround the youthful Peter with the worst influences. She exposed him systematically to temptation, she placed about him the most depraved and licentious associates, and seems to have encouraged the germination of every vicious propensity with the most fostering care. In 1689, during the absence of Prince Galitzin upon his second unsuccessful invasion of the Crimea, Peter was married, at the age of seventeen, through the influence of a faction hostile to Sophia, to a young lady of the Lapouchin family. After the return of Galitzin a desperate revolt of the Strelitzes was concerted between their general and Sophia and Galitzin, whose ob-

ject was to seize and murder Peter. He saved himself for the second time in the Convent of the Trinity—the usual place of refuge when the court was beleaguered, as was not unusual, by the Janizaries—assembled around him those of the boiars and the soldiers who were attached to him, and with the personal bravery and promptness which have descended like an heirloom in his family, defeated the conspirators at a blow, banished Galitzin to Siberia, and locked up Sophia in a convent, where she remained till her death fifteen years afterward. His brother John remained nominally as joint Czar till his death in 1696.

In less than a year from this time Peter made the acquaintance of a very remarkable man, to whom, more than to any other, Russia seems to have been indebted for the first impulse toward civilization. Happening one day to be dining at the house of the Danish minister, he was pleased with the manners and conversation of his Excellency's private secretary. This was a certain youthful Genevese adventurer named Lefort. He had been educated for the mercantile profession and placed in a counting-house; but being of an adventurous disposition, with decided military tastes and talents, he had enlisted as a volunteer and served with some distinction in the Low Countries. Still following his campaigning inclinations, he enlisted under a certain Colonel Verstin, who had been commissioned by the Czar Alexis to pick up some German recruits, and followed him to Archangel. Arriving there, he found that the death of Alexis had left no demand for the services either of himself or the Colonel, and after escaping with difficulty transportation to Siberia, with which he seems to have been threatened for no particular reason, he followed his destiny to

Moscow, where he found employment under the Danish envoy De Horn, and soon after was introduced to the Czar.

It was this young adventurer, a man of no extraordinary acquirements, but one who had had the advantage of a European education, and the genius to know its value and to reap its full benefit—a man of wonderful power of observation, in whom intuition took the place of experience, and who possessed the rare faculty of impressing himself upon other minds with that genial warmth and force which render the impression indelible—it was this truant Genevese clerk who planted the first seeds in the fertile but then utterly fallow mind of the Czar. Geniality and sympathy were striking characteristics of both minds, and they seem to have united by a kind of elective affinity from the first instant they were placed in neighborhood of each other.

It was from Lefort that the Czar first learned the great superiority of the disciplined troops of western Europe over the licentious and anarchical soldiery of Russia. It was in concert with Lefort that he conceived on the instant the daring plan of annihilating the Strelitzes, the body-guard which had set up and deposed the monarchs—a plan that would have inevitably cost a less sagacious and vigorous prince his throne and life, and which he silently and cautiously matured, till, as we shall have occasion to relate, it was successfully executed. Almost immediately after his acquaintance with Lefort, he formed a regiment upon the European plan, which was to be the germ of the reformed army which he contemplated. This regiment was called the Preobrazinski body-guard, from the name of the palace, and Lefort was appointed its colonel, while the Czar entered himself as drummer.

It was to Lefort, also, that the Czar was about this time indebted for the acquaintance of the celebrated Menshikoff. This was another adventurer, who had great influence upon the fortunes of the empire, who sprang from the very humblest origin, and who seemed like Lefort to have been guided from afar by the finger of Providence to become a fit instrument to carry out the plans of Peter. The son of miserable parents upon the banks of the Volga, not even taught to read or write, Menshikoff sought his fortune in Moscow, and at the age of fourteen became apprentice to a pastry-cook, and earned his living as an itinerant vender of cakes and pies; these he offered about the streets, recommending them in ditties of his own composing, which he sang in a very sweet voice. While engaged in this humble occupation he happened one day to attract the attention of Lefort, who entered into some little conversation with him. The Swiss volunteer, who had so lately expanded into the general and admiral of Muscovy, could hardly dream, nor did he live long enough to learn, that in that fair-haired, barefooted, sweet-voiced boy the future prince of the empire, general, governor, regent, and almost autocrat, stood disguised before him. There really seems something inexpressibly romantic in the accidental and strange manner in which the chief actors in the great drama of Peter's career seem to have been selected and to have received their several parts from the great hand of Fate. The youthful Menshikoff was presented by Lefort to the Czar, who was pleased with his appearance and vivacity and made him his page, and soon afterward his favorite and confidant. At about the same time that Peter commenced his model regiment, he had also commenced building some

vessels at Voroneje, with which he had already formed the design of sailing down the Don and conquering Azov, the key to the Black Sea, from the Turks.

Nothing indicated the true instinct of Peter's genius more decidedly than the constancy with which he cultivated a love for maritime affairs. He is said in infancy to have had an almost insane fear of water ; but, as there was never any special reason assigned for it, this was probably invented to make his naval progress appear more remarkable. At all events, he seems very soon to have conquered his hydrophobia, and in his boyhood appears to have found his chief amusement in paddling about the river Yausa, which passes through Moscow, in a little skiff built by a Dutchman, which had attracted his attention as being capable, unlike the flat-bottomed scows, which were the only boats with which he had been previously familiar, of sailing against the wind. Having solved the mystery of the keel, he became passionately fond of the sport, and not satisfied with the navigation of the Yausa, nor of the lake Peipus, upon which he amused himself for a time, he could not rest till he had proceeded to Archangel, where he purchased and manned a vessel, in which he took a cruise or two upon the Frozen Ocean as far as Ponoï, upon the coast of Lapland.

Peter understood thoroughly the position of his empire, the moment he came to the throne. Previous Czars had issued a multiplicity of edicts, forbidding their subjects to go out of the empire. Peter saw that the great trouble was that they could not get out. Both the natural gates of his realm were locked upon him, and the keys were in the hands of his enemies. When we look at the map of Russia now, we do not sufficiently appreciate the difficulties of Peter's

position at his accession. To do so is to appreciate his genius and the strength of his will. While paddling in his little skiff on the Yausa, he had already determined that this great inland empire of his, whose inhabitants had never seen or heard of the ocean, should become a maritime power. He saw that, without seaports, it could never be redeemed from its barbarism, and he was resolved to exchange its mongrel Orientalism for European civilization. Accordingly, before he had been within five hundred miles of blue water, he made himself a sailor, and at the same time formed the plan, which he pursued with iron pertinacity to its completion, of conquering the Baltic from the Swede, and the Euxine from the Turk. Fully to see and appreciate the necessity of this measure was, in the young, neglected barbarian prince, a great indication of genius; but the resolution to set about and accomplish this mighty scheme in the face of ten thousand obstacles constituted him a hero. He was, in fact, one of those few characters whose existence has had a considerable influence upon history. If he had not lived, Russia would very probably have been at the present moment one great Wallachia or Moldavia—a vast wilderness, peopled by the same uncouth barbarians who even now constitute the mass of its population, and governed by a struggling, brawling, confused mob of unlettered boiars, knavish priests, and cut-throat Janizaries.

It was not so trifling a task as it may now appear, for Russia to conquer Sweden and the Sublime Porte. On the contrary, Sweden was so vastly superior in the scale of civilization, and her disciplined troops, trained for a century upon the renowned battle-fields of Europe, with a young monarch at their head who loved war as other youths love a

mistress, gave her such a decided military preponderance that she looked upon Russia with contempt. The Ottoman Empire, too, was at that time not the rickety, decrepit state which it now is, holding itself up, like the cabman's horse, only by being kept in the shafts, and ready to drop the first moment its foreign master stops whipping; on the contrary, in the very year in which Peter inherited the empire from his brother Theodore, two hundred thousand Turks besieged Vienna, and drove the Emperor Leopold in dismay from his capital. Although the downfall of the Porte may be dated from the result of that memorable campaign, yet the Sultan was then a vastly more powerful potentate than the Czar, and the project to snatch from him the citadel of Azov, the key of the Black Sea, was one of unparalleled audacity.

But Peter had already matured the project, and was determined to execute it. He required seaports, and, having none, he determined to seize those of his neighbors. Like the "King of Bohemia with his seven castles," he was the "most unfortunate man in the world, because, having the greatest passion for navigation and all sorts of sea affairs, he had never a seaport in all his dominions." Without stopping however, like Corporal Trim, to argue the point in casuistry, whether—Russia, like Bohemia, being an inland country—it would be consistent with Divine benevolence for the ocean to inundate his neighbor's territory in order to accommodate him, he took a more expeditious method. Preferring to go to the ocean, rather than wait for the ocean to come to him, in 1695 he sailed down the Don with his vessels, and struck his first blow at Azov. His campaign was unsuccessful, through the treachery and desertion of an artillery offi-

cer named Jacob; but, as the Czar through life possessed the happy faculty of never knowing when he was beaten, he renewed his attack the next year, and carried the place with the most brilliant success. The key of the Palus Mæotis was thus in his hands, and he returned in triumph to Moscow, where he levied large sums upon the nobility and clergy, to build and sustain a fleet upon the waters he had conquered, to drive the Tartars from the Crimea, and to open and sustain a communication with Persia, through Circassia and Georgia.

Thus the first point was gained, and his foot at last touched the ocean. Moreover, the Tartars of the Crimea, who had been from time immemorial the pest of Russia—a horde of savages, who “said their prayers but once a year, and then to a dead horse,” and who had yet compelled the Muscovites to pay them an annual tribute, and had inserted in their last articles of peace the ignominious conditions that “the Czar should hold the stirrup of their Khan, and feed his horse with oats out of his cap, if they should chance at any time to meet”—these savages were humbled at a blow, and scourged into insignificance by the master hand of Peter.

A year or two before the capture of Azov, Peter had repudiated his wife. Various pretexts, such as infidelity and jealousy, have been assigned for the step; among others, the enmity of Menshikoff, whom she had incensed by the accusation that he had taken her husband to visit lewd women who had formerly been his customers for pies; but the real reason was that, like every one else connected with the great reformer, she opposed herself with the most besotted bigotry to all his plans. She was under the influence of the priests,

and the priests, of course, opposed him. Unfortunately, the Czar left his son Alexis in the charge of the mother, a mistake which, as we shall see, occasioned infinite disaster.

Peter, having secured himself a seaport, sent a number of young Russians to study the arts of civilized life in Holland, Italy, and Germany; but, being convinced that he must do everything for himself, and set the example to his subjects, he resolved to descend from his throne and go to Holland to perfect himself in the arts, and particularly to acquire a thorough practical knowledge of maritime affairs.

Having been hitherto unrepresented in any European court, he fitted out a splendid embassy extraordinary to the States-General of Holland—Lefort, Golownin, Voristzin, and Menshikoff being the plenipotentiaries, while the Czar accompanied them *incognito*, as *attaché* to the mission. The embassy proceeds through Esthonia and Livonia, visits Riga—where the Swedish Governor, D'Alberg, refuses permission to visit the fortifications, an indignity which Peter resolves to punish severely—and, proceeding through Prussia, is received with great pomp by the King at Königsberg. Here the Germans and Russians, “most potent at pottery,” meet each other with exuberant demonstrations of friendship, and there is much carousing and hard drinking. At this place Peter leaves the embassy, travels privately and with great rapidity to Holland, and never rests till he has established himself as a journeyman in the dockyard of Mynheer Calf. From a seafaring man named Kist, whom he had known in Archangel, he hires lodgings, consisting of a small room and kitchen, and a garret above them, and immediately commences a laborious and practical devotion to the trade which he had determined to acquire. The Czar soon became a

most accomplished ship-builder. His first essay was upon a small yacht, which he purchased and refitted upon his arrival, and in which he spent all his leisure moments, sailing about in the harbor, visiting the vessels in port, and astonishing the phlegmatic Dutchmen by the agility with which he flew about among the shipping. Before his departure he laid down and built, from his own draught and model, a sixty-gun ship, at much of the carpentry of which he worked with his own hands, and which was declared by many competent judges to be an admirable specimen of naval architecture.

But, besides his proficiency so rapidly acquired in all maritime matters, he made considerable progress in civil engineering, mathematics, and the science of fortification, besides completely mastering the Dutch language, and acquiring the miscellaneous accomplishments of tooth-drawing, bloodletting, and tapping for the dropsy. He was indefatigable in visiting every public institution, charitable, literary, or scientific, in examining the manufacturing establishments, the corn-mills, saw-mills, paper-mills, oil-factories, all of which he studied practically, with the view of immediately introducing these branches of industry into his own dominions; and, before leaving Holland, he spent some time at Texel, solely for the purpose of examining the whale-ships, and qualifying himself to instruct his subjects in this pursuit after his return. "*Wat is dat? Dat wil ik zien,*" was his eternal exclamation to the quiet Hollanders, who looked with profound astonishment at this boisterous foreign prince, in carpenter's disguise, flying round like a harlequin, swinging his stick over the backs of those who stood in his way, making strange grimaces, and rushing from one object to

another with a restless activity of body and mind which seemed incomprehensible. He devoured every possible morsel of knowledge with unexampled voracity; but the sequel proved that his mind had an ostrich-like digestion as well as appetite. The seeds which he collected in Holland, Germany, and England bore a rich harvest in the Scythian wildernesses, where his hand planted them on his return. Having spent about nine months in the Netherlands, he left that country for England.

His purpose in visiting England was principally to examine her navy-yards, dockyards, and maritime establishments, and to acquire some practical knowledge of English naval architecture. He did not design to work in the dockyards, but he preserved his *incognito*, although received with great attention by King William, who furthered all his plans to the utmost, and deputed the Marquis of Caermarthen, with whom the Czar became very intimate, to minister to all his wants during his residence in England. He was first lodged in York Buildings; but afterward, in order to be near the sea, he took possession of a house called Sayes Court, belonging to the celebrated John Evelyn, "with a back door into the king's yard, at Deptford"; there, says an old writer, "he would often take up the carpenters' tools, and work with them; and he frequently conversed with the builders, who showed him their draughts, and the method of laying down, by proportion, any ship or vessel."

It is amusing to observe the contempt with which the servant of the gentle, pastoral Evelyn writes to his master concerning his imperial tenant, and the depredations and desecrations committed upon his "most boscaresque grounds." "There is a house full of people," he says,

"right nasty. The Czar lies next your library, and dines in the parlor next your study. He dines at ten o'clock, and six at night; is very seldom at home a whole day; very often in the king's yard, or by water, dressed in several dresses. The best parlor is pretty clean for the King to be entertained in." Moreover, in the garden at Sayes Court, there was, to use Evelyn's own language, "a glorious and refreshing object, an impregnable hedge of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five feet in diameter, at any time of the year glittering with its armed and variegated leaves; the taller standards, at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral"; and through this "glorious and refreshing object" the Czar amused himself by trundling a wheelbarrow every morning for the sake of the exercise!

He visited the hospitals, and examined most of the public institutions in England; and particularly directed his attention toward acquiring information in engineering, and collecting a body of skillful engineers and artificers to carry on the great project which he had already matured of opening an artificial communication by locks and canals between the Volga, the Don, and the Caspian—a design, by the way, which was denounced by the clergy and nobility of his empire "as a piece of impiety, being to turn the streams one way which Providence had directed another." His evenings were generally spent with the Marquis of Caermarthen, with pipes, beer, and brandy, at a tavern near Tower Hill, which is still called the "Czar of Muscovy."

During his stay in England he went to see the University of Oxford, and visited many of the cathedrals and churches, and "had also the curiosity to view the Quakers

and other Dissenters at their meeting-houses in the time of service." In this connection it is impossible not to quote the egregiously foolish remarks of Bishop Burnet in his "History of his own Times":

"I waited upon him often," says the Bishop, "and was ordered, both by the King and the Archbishop, to attend upon him and to offer him such information as to our religion and constitution as he might be willing to receive. I had good interpreters, so I had much free discourse with him. He is a man of a very hot temper, soon influenced, and very brutal in his passion; he raises his natural heat by drinking much brandy, which he rectifies himself with great application; he is subject to convulsive motions all over his body, and his head seems to be affected with these. He wants not capacity, and has a larger measure of knowledge than might be expected from his education, which was very indifferent; a want of judgment, with an instability of temper, appears in him but too often and too evidently. He is mechanically turned, and seems designed by nature rather *to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince*. This was his chief study and exercise while he staid here; he wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work at the models of ships. He told me he designed a great fleet at Azov, and with it to attack the Turkish Empire; but he did not seem capable of conducting so great a design, though his conduct in his wars since this has discovered a greater genius in him than appeared at that time. He was desirous to understand our doctrine, but he did not seem *disposed to mend matters in Muscovy*. He was, indeed, resolved to encourage learning and to polish his people by sending some of them to travel in other countries, and to draw strangers to come and live among them. He seemed apprehensive still of his sister's intrigues. There is a mixture both of passion and severity in his temper. He is resolute, but understands little of war, and seemed not at all inquisitive in that way. After I had seen him often, and had conversed much with him, I could not but

adore the depth of the providence of God, that had raised up such a furious man to so absolute an authority over so great a part of the world."—"History of his own Times," vol. ii., pp. 221, 222.)

The complacency with which the prelate speaks of this "furious man," designed by nature rather to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince," who "did not seem disposed to mend matters in Muscovy," is excessively ludicrous. Here was a youth of twenty-five, who had seen with a glance the absolute necessity of opening for his empire a pathway to the ocean, and had secured that pathway by a blow, and who now, revolving in his mind the most daring schemes of conquest over martial neighbors, and vast projects of internal improvement for his domains, had gone forth in mask and domino from his barbarous citadel, not for a holiday pastime, but to acquire the arts of war and peace, and, like a modern Cadmus, to transplant from older regions the seeds of civilization to the barbarous wildernesses of his realm. Here was a crowned monarch, born in the purple, and in the very heyday of his youth, exchanging his diadem and scepter for the tools of a shipwright, while at the same time in his capacious brain his vast future lay as clearly imaged, and his great projects already to his imagination appeared as palpable as, long years afterward, when completed, they became to the observation of the world; and yet, upon the whole, the churchman thought him "not disposed to mend matters in Muscovy," and rather fitted by nature "to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince."

The Czar, before his departure from England, engaged a large number of scientific persons, at the head of whom was Ferguson, the engineer, to accompany him to Russia,

to be employed upon the various works of internal improvement already projected. To all these persons he promised liberal salaries, which were never paid, and perfect liberty to depart when they chose, "with crowns for convoy put into their purse"; although, in the sequel, the poor devils never got a ruble for their pains, and those who escaped assassination by some jealous Russian or other, and were able to find their way "bootless home, and weather-beaten back," after a few profitless years spent upon the Czar's sluices and bridges, were to be considered fortunate.

One of the disadvantages, we suppose, of one man's owning a whole quarter of the globe and all its inhabitants, is a tendency to think lightly of human obligations. It is useless to occupy one's mind with engagements that no human power can enforce. The artificers, being there, might accomplish their part of the Czar's mission to civilize, or at least to Europeanize, Russia. This was matter of consequence to the world; their salaries were of no importance to anybody but themselves. It is odd that these persons were the first to introduce into Russia the science of reckoning by Arabic numerals, accounts having been formerly kept (and, indeed, being still kept by all shopkeepers and retail dealers) by means of balls upon a string, as billiards are marked in America. For the Czar to have introduced an improved method of account-keeping by means of the very men with whom he intended to keep no account at all seems a superfluous piece of irony, but so it was. He had, however, a nicer notion of what was due from one potentate to another; for, upon taking his departure from England, he took from his breeches-pocket a ruby, wrapped in brown paper, worth about ten thousand pounds,

and presented it to King William. He also, in return for the agreeable hours passed with Lord Caermarthen at the "Czar of Muscovy" upon Tower Hill, presented that nobleman with the right to license every hogshead of tobacco exported to Russia by an English company who had paid him fifteen thousand pounds for the monopoly, and to charge five shillings for each license.

Upon his return through Vienna, where he was entertained with great pomp, he received news of an insurrection which had broken out in Moscow, but which had already been suppressed by the energy of General Patrick Gordon. This news induced him to give up his intended visit to Italy and to hasten back to his capital. He found upon his arrival that the Strelitzes, who, instigated of course by the Princess Sophia, were the authors of the revolt, had been defeated and the ringleaders imprisoned. He immediately hung up three or four of them in front of Sophia's window, had half a dozen more hung and quartered, and a few more broken upon the wheel. Under the circumstances, this was quite as little as a Czar who respected himself, and who proposed to remain Czar, could have done by way of retaliation upon a body of men as dangerous as these Strelitzes.

It is not singular, however, that at that day, when the Czar of Muscovy was looked upon by western Europeans as an ogre who habitually breakfasted upon his subjects, these examples of wholesome severity were magnified into the most improbable fables. Korb, the secretary of the Austrian legation at Moscow, entertained his sovereign with minute details of several banquets given by Peter to the nobility and diplomatic corps, at every one of which

several dozen Strelitzes were decapitated in the dining-room. He tells of one select dinner-party in particular, in which the Czar chopped off the heads of twenty with his own hands, washing down each head with a bumper of brandy, and then obliging Lefort, and several of the judges, and some of the foreign ministers, to try their hand at the sport. In short, if we could believe contemporary memorialists, the Strelitzes were kept in preserves like pheasants, and a grand *battue* was given once a week by the Czar to his particular friends, in which he who bagged the most game was sure to recommend himself most to the autocrat. If we were to rely upon the general tone of contemporary history, or to place any credence in circumstantial and statistical details of persons having facts within their reach, we should believe that there never was so much fun in Moscow as while these Strelitzes lasted. Residents there stated that two thousand of them were executed in all, including those made away with by the Czar and the *dilettanti*.

Perhaps our readers may think that we are exaggerating. We can assure them that the flippancy is not ours, but history's. We should have dwelt less upon the topic had not our friend the Marquis de Custine reproduced some of these fables with such imperturbable gravity.*

* On lit dans M. de Ségur les faits suivants : " Pierre, lui-même a interrogé ces criminels (les Strélitz) par la torture ; puis à l'imitation d'Iwan le Tyran, il se fait leur juge, leur bourreau ; il force ses nobles, restés fidèles, à trancher les têtes des nobles coupables, qu'ils viennent de condamner. Le cruel, du haut de son trône assiste d'un œil sec à ces exécutions ; il fait plus, il mêle aux joies des festins l'horreur des supplices. Ivre de vin et de sang, le verre d'une main, la hache de l'autre, en une seule heure, vingt libations successives marquent la chute de

At all events, the Strelitzes were entirely crushed by these vigorous measures; and from cutting off the heads of the Janizaries, the Czar now found leisure to cut off the petticoats and beards of his subjects. The great cause of complaint which De Custine makes against Peter is that he sought to improve his country by importing the seeds of civilization from the older countries of western Europe. He would have preferred to have had the Russians, being a Slavonic race, civilized as it were Slavonically. What this process is, and where it has been successfully put into operation, he does not inform us. As we read the history of the world, it seems to us that the arts have circled the earth, successively implanting themselves in different countries at different epochs, and producing different varieties of intellectual, moral, and physical fruit, corresponding to the myriad influences exercised upon the seed. At all events, if Peter made a mistake in importing the germs of ancient culture from more favored lands, it was a mistake he made in common with Cadmus, and Cecrops, and The-

vingt têtes de Strélitz, qu'il abat à ses pieds, en s'enorgueillissant de son horrible adresse. L'année d'après, le contre coup, soit du soulèvement de ses Janissaires, soit de l'atrocité de leur supplice, retentit au loin dans l'empire, et d'autres revoltes éclatent. Quatre-vingt Strélitz, chargés de chaînes, sont trainés d'Azoff à Moscou, et leurs têtes, qu'un boyard tient successivement par les cheveux, tombent encore sous la hache du Czar."—"Histoire de Russie et de Pierre le Grand," par M. le Général Comte de Ségur.—"La Russie en 1839," par le Marquis de Custine, i., 306.)

"Mais tandis que ce grand précepteur de son peuple enseignait si bien la civilité puérile aux boyards et aux marchands de Moscou, il s'abaissait lui même à la pratique des métiers les plus vils, à commencer par celui de bourreau; on lui a vu couper vingt têtes de sa main dans une soirée; et on l'a entendu se vanter de son adresse à ce métier, qu'il exerça avec une rare férocité lorsqu'il eut triomphé des coupables, mais encore plus malheureux Strélitz," etc.—(De Custine, iii., 330.)

seus, and other semi-fabulous personages—with Solon, and Lycurgus, and Pythagoras, in less crepuscular times.

Right or wrong, however, Peter was determined to Occidentalize his empire. The darling wish of his heart was to place himself upon the seashore, in order the more easily to Europeanize his country. In the mean time, and while awaiting a good opportunity for the "reannexation" of Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia, provinces which had several centuries before belonged to the Russian crown, but had been ceded to and possessed by Sweden for ages, he began to denationalize his subjects by putting a tax upon their beards and their petticoats. Strange to say, his subjects were so much more patriotic than their master, that the tax became very productive. Peter increased his revenue, but could not diminish the beards or petticoats. He was obliged to resort to force, and by "entertaining a score or two of tailors and barbers" at each gate of Moscow, whose business it was to fasten upon every man who entered, and to "cut his petticoats all round about," as well as his whiskers, he at last succeeded in humanizing their costume—a process highly offensive, and which caused the clergy, who naturally favored the Russian nationality upon which they were fattened, to denounce him as Antichrist. At the same time he altered the commencement of the year from the 1st of September to the 1st of January, much to the astonishment of his subjects, who wondered that the Czar could change the course of the sun. He also instituted assemblies for the encouragement of social intercourse between the sexes. But his most important undertakings were the building, under his immediate superintendence, assisted by the English officers whom he had brought with him, of a

large fleet upon the Don, and the junction of that river with the Volga. About this time he met with an irreparable loss in the death of Lefort, who perished at the early age of forty-six. Peter was profoundly afflicted by this event, and honored his remains with magnificent obsequies.

Both coasts of the Gulf of Finland, together with both banks of the river Neva, up to the lake Ladoga, had been long and were still in possession of the Swedes. These frozen morasses were not a tempting site for a metropolis, certainly; particularly when they happened to be in the possession of the most warlike nation of Europe, governed by the most warlike monarch, as the sequel proved, that had ever sat upon its throne. Still, Peter had determined to take possession of that coast, and already in imagination had built his capital upon those dreary solitudes, peopled only by the elk, the wolf, and the bear. This man, more than any one perhaps that ever lived, was an illustration of the power of volition. He always settled in his own mind exactly what he wanted, and then put on his wishing-cap. With him to will was to have. Obstacles he took as a matter of course. It never seemed to occur to him to doubt the accomplishment of his purpose. For our own part we do not admire the capital which he built, nor the place he selected; both are mistakes, in our humble opinion, as time will prove and is proving. But it is impossible not to admire such a masterly effort of human volition as the erection of Petersburg.

In the year 1700 was formed the alliance between Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, the King of Denmark, and the Czar Peter, against Charles XII., King of Sweden, then a boy of eighteen, of whose character

nothing was known, and who, it was thought probable, might be bullied. The Czar, as we know, desired Ingria and Carelia. Augustus wished to regain Esthonia and Livonia, ceded by Poland to Charles XI. of Sweden; and Denmark wished to recover Holstein and Schleswig. It soon appeared that the allied sovereigns had got hold of the wrong man. Charles XII., to the astonishment of his own court no less than of his enemies, in one instant blazed forth a hero. He "smote the sledded Polack," to begin with; then defeated the Danes; and, having thus dispatched his two most formidable enemies in appearance, he was at leisure to devote his whole attention to the Czar, whom, however, he treated with the contempt which a thoroughbred soldier, at the head of tried and disciplined troops, naturally felt for the barbarous autocrat of barbarous hordes.

Peter, however, who knew nothing of war but in theory, with the exception of his maiden campaign of Azov, went manfully forward to the encounter. He invaded Ingria at the head of sixty thousand men; and wishing, like Andrew Aguecheek, to "keep on the windy side of the law," and to save appearances, he defended his invasion by the ludicrous pretext that his ambassadors had been charged exorbitant prices for provisions on their tour through the Swedish provinces to Holland, and that he himself had been denied a sight of the citadel at Riga. Not that he wanted Riga himself, or Ingria, or Livonia—"Oh, no, not at all"—but the preposterous charges made by the butchers and bakers of Ingria were insults which could only be washed out in blood. On the 20th of September he laid siege to Narva, a strongly fortified town on the river Narowa. On the 19th

of November, Charles XII. fell upon Peter's army during a tremendous snow-storm, which blew directly in their teeth, and with nine thousand soldiers completely routed and cut to pieces or captured about sixty thousand Russians. Never was a more ignominious defeat. The Russians were slaughtered like sheep, and their long petticoats prevented the survivors from running away half as fast as they wished. The consequence was that, according to the Swedish accounts, the prisoners four times outnumbered the whole Swedish army.

One would have thought that this would have settled the Czar for a little while, and kept him quiet and reasonable. It did so. He preserved the most imperturbable *sang froid* after his return to Moscow, and devoted himself with more zeal than ever to the junction of the Baltic and the Euxine, just at the moment when the former seemed farthest from him, and when a common man would have been "qualmish at the name" of Baltic. At the same time, reversing the commonplace doctrine, he continues in war to prepare for peace—with one hand importing sheep from Saxony, erecting linen and paper factories, building hospitals and founding schools, while with the other he melts all the church and convent bells in Moscow into cannon, and makes every preparation for a vigorous campaign the ensuing season. He had not the slightest suspicion that he was beaten. He was, in fact, one of those intellectual Titans who never feel their strength till they have been fairly struck to the earth. "I know very well," he says in his journal, "that the Swedes will have the advantage of us for a considerable time; but they will teach us at length to beat them." And at a later period he says: "If we had ob-

tained a victory over the Swedes at Narva, being, as we were, so little instructed in the arts of war and policy, into what an abyss might not this good fortune have sunk us! On the contrary, the success of the Swedes cost them very dear afterward at Pultowa."

In the following spring his troops obtained some trifling successes, and General Scherematoff made the memorable capture of Marienburg, in Livonia, memorable not so much in a military point of view as on account of a young and pretty Livonian girl who was captured with the town. This young woman, whose Christian name was Martha, without any patronymic, or any at least that has been preserved, was born near Dorpt, and had been educated by one Dr. Gluck, a Lutheran minister at Marienburg, who pronounced her a "pattern of virtue, intelligence, and good conduct"; she had been married the day before the battle of Marienburg to a Swedish sergeant, who fell in the action, and she now found herself alone, a friendless, helpless widow and orphan of sixteen, exposed without any protector to all the horrors of a besieged and captured town.

If a writer of fiction, with a brain fertile in extravagant and incredible romance, had chosen to describe to us this young peasant-girl, weeping half distracted among the smoking ruins of an obscure provincial town, and then, after rapidly shifting a few brilliant and tumultuous scenes in his phantasmagoria, had presented to us the same orphan girl as a crowned empress, throned upon a quarter of the world, and the sole arbitress and autocrat of thirty millions of human beings, and all this without any discovery of a concealed origin, without crime and without witchcraft, with nothing supernatural in the machinery, and nothing

intricate in the plot—should we not all have smiled at his absurdity? And yet, this captive girl became the consort of the Czar Peter, and upon his death the Empress of all the Russias. The Russian General Bauer saw her, and rescued her from the dangers of the siege. She afterward became the mistress of Menshikoff, with whom she lived till 1704, when, in the seventeenth year of her age, the Czar saw her, was captivated by her beauty, and took her for his mistress, and afterward privately, and then publicly, married her.

It is to this epoch that belongs the abolition of the patriarchal dignity in Russia. Peter, having at a blow destroyed the Strelitzes, had long intended to annihilate the ecclesiastical power, the only balance which existed in the country to the autocracy of the sovereign. The superstition of the Russians was and is unbounded. Their principal saint was Saint Anthony, who, says a quaint old author, “came all the way from Rome to Novgorod by water on a millstone, sailing down the Tiber to Cività Vecchia, from thence passing through several seas to the mouth of the Neva, then went up that, and, crossing the lake Ladoga into the Volkhoff, arrived at the city before named. Besides this extraordinary voyage, he wrought several other miracles as soon as he landed where the monastery now stands that is dedicated to him; one was, to order a company of fishermen to cast their nets into the sea; which having done, they immediately drew up, with a great quantity of fish, a large trunk containing several church ornaments, sacred utensils, and priestly vestments for celebrating the liturgy, which the Russians, as well as the Eastern Greeks, believe was first performed at Rome in the same manner and with the same ceremonies as they themselves use at this time.

The people tell you further that he built himself a little cell, in which he ended his days. In this place there now stands a chapel, in which they say he was buried, and that his body remains as uncorrupted as at the instant of his death. Over the door of the cell the monks show a millstone, which they endeavor to make the ignorant people believe is the very same that the saint sailed upon from Rome, and to which great devotions were once paid, and many offerings made till the time Peter the Great made himself sovereign pontiff."

To this saint, or to Saint Nicholas, we forget which, letters of introduction were always addressed by the priests, and placed in the hands of the dead when laid in their coffins. The superstition of the Russians is grosser and more puerile than that of any people purporting to be Christians. They would rather starve than eat pigeons, because the Holy Ghost assumed the form of a dove; they dip their new-born children into the Neva in January, through holes cut in the ice, directly after the ceremony of blessing the water has been concluded by the Patriarch; and it would be an easy but endless task to enumerate other similar absurdities. It may be supposed that the patriarchal dignity, founded upon superstition as solid as this, would be a difficult power to contend with. It was so. The Patriarch's power was enormous. He pronounced sentence of life, and death, and torture, without intervention of any tribunal. On Palm Sunday he rode to church upon an ass "caparisoned in white linen," at the head of a long procession of ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries, with a miter upon his head, and "skirts of many colors, three or four ells long," borne by a band of young men, while the Czar walked

uncovered by his side, holding the bridle of the beast upon his arm.

This dignity, which had been established by a sort of accident in the year 1588, up to which time the Russian Church acknowledged the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, had grown to be very distasteful to Peter. The Church was the greatest possible enemy to his plans of reformation. The bigotry of its opposition to all his projects was insurmountable. Besides, it was very inconvenient that any one should have any power or any rights except himself. He determined to annihilate the office of Patriarch, and to place himself at the head of the Church. We do not find, however, that he thought it necessary to go through an apprenticeship in this profession, as he had done in others; but, on the contrary, upon the death of the Patriarch Adrian, which happened about this time, he simply appointed himself *pontifex maximus*, and declined nominating any other Patriarch. The man who had destroyed the Janizaries, cut off the beards of his subjects, and changed the course of the sun, was also strong enough to trample the prelate's miter in the dust. He was entirely successful in his contest with the Church. The clergy made but a feeble resistance. The printing-press, to be sure, which he had first introduced into Russia, swarmed with libels upon him, and denounced him as Antichrist; but he was defended by others of the clergy, "because the number six hundred and sixty-six was not found in his name, and he had not the sign of the beast."

Before the close of the year 1702 the troops of the Czar had driven the Swedes from the Ladoga and the Neva, and had taken possession of all the ports in Carelia and Ingria.

On the 16th of May, without waiting another moment after having possessed himself of the locality, he begins to build his metropolis. One hundred thousand miserable workmen are consumed in the first twelve months, succumbing to the rigorous climate and the unhealthy position. But "*il faut casser des œufs pour faire une omelette*"; in one year's time there are thirty thousand houses in Petersburg. Never was there such a splendid improvisation. Look for a moment at a map of Russia and say if Petersburg was not a magnificent piece of volition—a mistake, certainly, and an extensive one—but still a magnificent mistake. Upon a delta, formed by the dividing branches of the Neva—upon a miserable morass half under water, without stones, without clay, without earth, without wood, without building materials of any kind—having behind it the outlet of the lake Ladoga and its tributary swamps, and before it the Gulf of Finland contracting itself into a narrow compass, and ready to deluge it with all the waters of the Baltic whenever the southwest wind should blow a gale eight and forty hours—with a climate of polar severity, and a soil as barren as an iceberg—was not Petersburg a bold *impromptu*? We never could look at this capital, with its imposing though monotonous architecture, its colossal squares, its vast colonnades, its endless vistas, its spires and minarets sheathed in barbaric gold and flashing in the sun, and remember the magical rapidity with which it was built, and the hundred thousand lives that were sacrificed in building it, without recalling Milton's description of the building of Pandemonium :

“ Anon out of the earth a fabric huge

Rose like an exhalation, . . .

Built like a temple, where pilasters round

Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave ; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven ;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height ; and straight the doors
Opening their brazen folds discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement."

Within a few months after the foundation of Petersburg and Cronstadt, Peter had the pleasure of piloting into his new seaport with his own hands a vessel belonging to his old friend Cornelius Calf, of Saardam. The transfer of the seat of government, by the removal of the Senate from Moscow to Petersburg, was effected a few years afterward. Since that time, the repudiated Oriental capital of the ancient Czars, the magnificent Moscow, with her golden tiara and her Eastern robe, has sat, like Hagar in the wilderness, deserted and lonely in all her barbarian beauty. Yet even now, in many a backward look and longing sigh she reads plainly enough that she is not forgotten by her sovereign, that she is still at heart preferred, and that she will eventually triumph over her usurping and artificial rival.

The building of Petersburg in a year was, however, a mere *aside* in the great military drama that was going on. Peter founded this city as soon as he had won a place for it; but the war still went on. While the Czar was erecting his

capital, establishing woolen manufactures, and importing sheep from Saxony, Charles XII. was knocking the Elector of Saxony off the Polish throne, putting Stanislaus Leckzinsky in his place, and ravaging all Poland and Saxony. The scenes of the great drama which occupied the next few years, but which we have no intention of sketching, opened in Poland, and closed on the confines of Turkey. It is a magnificent, eventful, important drama, a chapter of history which has been often written and is familiar to almost every one, and yet which would well bear handling again. There is no life of Peter which is in all respects satisfactory, which does not partake too much of eulogium or censure in its estimation of his character; and there is none which develops with sufficient accuracy and impartiality, and in a sufficiently striking manner, the stirring events of the great Northern war. The brilliant drama enacted in the first fifteen years of the present century—forming probably the most splendid chapter in the military history of the world, and which is still so fresh in the minds of men—has thrown into comparative oblivion the very picturesque and imposing scenes which were displayed in the first fifteen years of the eighteenth. And yet what a magnificent subject for the historical painter, what imposing personages, what dramatic catastrophes, what sudden and bewildering reverses, what wild scenery, what Salvator-like *chiaroscuro*—dark Sarmatian forests enveloping the actors in mystery and obscurity, with flashes of light breaking upon the anxious suspense of Europe, and revealing portentous battles, sieges, and hair-breadth escapes—what “dreadful marches” through the wilderness, what pitched combats, upon whose doubtful result hinged, as almost never before or since, the weal or woe of millions, and

in which kings fought sword in hand in the hottest of the fight, with their crowns staked upon the issue!

There was always something very exciting to our imagination in the characters of the three kings who were the principal actors in the Northern war. There seemed to be a strange, fitful, mythical character about the war and the men who waged it. The Elector Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, with his superhuman and almost fabulous physical strength, his personal bravery, his showy, chivalrous character, his world-renowned adventures in a gentler field, familiar to posterity through the records of "*La Saxe galante*," is a striking personage. It is astonishing that such a magnificent Lothario should have chosen, for the barren honor of being elected to the Polish throne, to exchange the brilliant and voluptuous gayety of his own court for "the bloody noses and cracked crowns" which were "passing current" in Poland. But it is still more astonishing that, having once engaged in the affair, he should have cut such a miserable figure in it. The splendid Augustus, Augustus the Strong, Augustus the Gallant, became merely the anvil for the sledge-hammers of Charles and Peter. He made a fool of himself; he disgraced himself more than it seemed possible for a human being to disgrace himself; he humiliated himself more completely, more stupidly, because more unnecessarily, than it seemed possible for the greatest idiot, as well as the most arrant coward, to humiliate himself. He lost his crown at the very start, went down on his knees in the dirt to pick it up again, made a secret treaty with Charles, renouncing his alliance with the Czar, deserted his ally with incredible folly just as the Russians in conjunction with his own troops were gaining a brilliant victory and en-

tering Warsaw in triumph, concealed his shameful negotiation from his own generals, while at the same time he wrote a letter to Charles, apologizing for having gained a victory, and assuring him that he had intended to have drawn off his troops and deserted to the enemy, but that his orders had not been obeyed, and then sneaked off to Charles's camp, where, in obedience to that monarch's orders, he capped the climax of his shame by writing a letter of sincere and humble congratulation to Stanislaus Leckzinsky for supplanting him upon his own throne. Peter, in the sequel, put his crown on his head again, to be sure ; but for ever after he looked like

“ . . . the thief,

Who from the shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket.”

What a pity that this man, who was deficient neither in courage nor, we suppose, in a certain amount of intellect sufficient for all ordinary purposes, should have got himself into such a scrape merely for the sake of carrying an election over the Prince of Conti and Stanislaus ! The truth was that, the moment he got among giants—giants in action, like Charles and Peter—he showed himself the pygmy he was in mind, despite his stature, his strength, and his personal bravery.

And Charles XII., the hero, the crowned gladiator—what had he to do with the eighteenth century ? The hero of everybody's boyhood, he remains a puzzle and a mystery to us in our maturer years. He seems an impossibility in the times in which he lived. On the death of Charles XI., and the commencement of the hostile movement by Russia and Denmark, the stripling sovereign seems to dilate into

the vast, shadowy proportions of some ancient hero of Scandinavian Sagas. He seems like one of the ancient Norsemen, whose vocation was simply to fight—who conquered the whole earth, not because they wanted it, but because they were sent into the world for no other earthly purpose; a legitimate representative of the old Sea-Kings, or rather an ancient Sea-King himself, reappearing in the eighteenth century, with no specially defined object, and proposing to himself no particular business in the world which he had so suddenly revisited, but to fight as much as possible, and with anybody that came along. Viewed in this light, he can be judged more justly. He was out of place where he was. He would have been a magnificent hero and a useful personage six or seven hundred years earlier. He was a very mischievous character in the eighteenth century. People no longer fought in the same way as before; they no longer fought for the fun of it; they now had always an object in their wars. Sovereigns, however belligerent in taste, had always an eye to their interest. This was preëminently the case with his great antagonist, Peter. He never fought except for an object; but, sooner than relinquish the object, he would have fought till “sun and moon were in the flat sea sunk.” He was a creator, a founder, a lawgiver, as well as a warrior. He was constructive; Charles merely destructive. The Czar was a great statesman; Charles only a great gladiator. In war, Peter was always preparing for peace; as for Charles, after he first started upon his career, he never seemed to have had the faintest suspicion that there was such a thing, such a *status*, as peace. He came into the world to fight; and he fought; he lived fighting, he died fighting. He poured himself out, like a fierce torrent from his native

mountains, in one wild, headlong, devastating flood. There was nothing beneficent, nothing fertilizing, in his career. His kingdom was neglected, his treasury exhausted, his subjects impoverished; while he himself, from the admiration and wonder of Europe, became, or would have become, but for his timely death, its laughing-stock. The hero at Narva was only Bombastes Furioso at Bender.

While Charles was deposing Augustus and crowning Stanislaus, the troops of Peter were not idle. Keeping his eye ever fixed upon his great object, the Czar was adding to his domain province after province of what was then the Swedish seacoast. Dorpat and Narva are captured, and with them all Ingria, of which Peter makes the pastry-cook's apprentice Governor. Courland soon follows, and now the Czar joins his forces to those of Augustus in Poland. While he is called off to quell an insurrection in Astrakhan (distances are nothing to the Czar), Augustus seizes the opportunity to make the ignominious compact with the Swedish king to which we have referred, and—most shameful and perfidious part of his treason—surrenders to the vengeance of the ferocious Charles, *to the torture and the wheel*, the unfortunate General Patkul, ambassador of the Czar at the court of Augustus, who had incurred the hatred of the Swedish monarch for heading a deputation of Livonian nobles, and presenting to him a petition concerning the rights and privileges of their province. The allies of King Augustus take possession of Warsaw, while King Augustus himself is writing his congratulations to King Stanislaus.

Peter, having helped himself to almost as many Swedish provinces as he cared for, while Charles has been bullying

Augustus and breaking Patkul on the wheel, is now disposed to treat for peace. The French envoy at Dresden offers his services, but Charles declines treating except at Moscow. "My brother Charles wishes to act Alexander," says the Czar; "but he shall not find me Darius."

Peter now conceives almost exactly the same plan by which the conqueror of the nineteenth century was entrapped and destroyed. He makes his country and climate fight for him, and retreats slowly before his advancing enemy, drawing him on step by step to a barren country, whence he could have no retreat, and where Peter could suddenly advance from his own secure position and overwhelm him at a blow. With masterly generalship he retreats before his hot-headed adversary, still "tempting him to the desert with his sword," marches to Mohilev and Orsha on the eastern bank of the Dnieper, a position in free communication with Smolensk, sends his Cossacks to lay waste the country for thirty miles round, and then orders them to join him beyond the Borysthenes. The two Northern monarchs now disappear from the eyes of anxious Europe among the wildernesses of ancient Scythia. Peter, with a hundred thousand men well provided and in convenient communication with his own cities and magazines, remains quiet. Charles, intent upon dictating terms at Moscow, crosses the Borysthenes with eighty thousand men. A fierce battle without results is fought on the Beresina. Charles pushes on to Smolensk. By order of Peter the country between the Borysthenes and Smolensk had been laid waste. At the approach of winter the Swedish army dwindles and wastes away beneath the horrors of the iron climate. Still Charles advances, when

suddenly, and to the Czar inexplicably, he turns aside from his path, abandons his design upon Moscow, and directs his steps to the Ukraine. The mystery is solved by the news of Mazeppa's treason. The old Hetman of the Cossacks deserts to Charles, promising to bring over all his troops: he brings no one but himself; the Cossacks scorn his treachery, and remain faithful to their Czar.

By this time it was December, the cold intense, and, the Swedish army perishing by thousands, Count Piper implores his master to halt and go into the best winter-quarters they could find in the Ukraine. The King refuses, resolved to reduce the Ukraine, and then march to Moscow. In the month of May, after a winter spent by the Czar's forces in comfortable quarters and by the King's exposed to all kinds of misery, Charles lays siege to Pultowa with eighteen thousand men, the remnant of his eighty thousand. On the 15th of June, 1709, the Czar appears before Pultowa, and, by feint of attack upon the Swedes, succeeds in throwing two thousand men into the place, and at length, a few days after, gives him battle and utterly routs and destroys his army. Both the King and the Czar, throughout this

“ . . . dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede.”

fight in the front of the battle. Several balls pierce the Czar's clothes; while Charles, having been previously wounded in the heel, is carried through the fight upon a litter. After the total overthrow of his army Charles escapes on horseback with a handful of followers, and, entering the confines of Turkey, halts at Bender on the Dniester.

The battle of Pultowa and the final overthrow of Charles are followed during the autumn and winter by the complete conquest of Livonia—Viborg, Elbing, Riga, and Revel being taken early in 1710. At the same time Peter deposes Stanislaus and restores the illustrious Augustus.

In the mean time Charles remains at Bender, the stipendiary of the Sultan, while Poniatowski, his emissary at the Porte, is busily intriguing to bring about a declaration of war from Turkey against the Czar. In conjunction with the Khan of the Crimean Tartars, who appeals to the Sultan's jealousy of the increasing power of Russia, and inspires him with a desire to recover Azov and expel his encroaching neighbors from the Black Sea, the envoy succeeds. The Grand Mufti declares that it is necessary for the Sultan to go to war with the Czar; whereupon the Muscovite ambassador is forthwith "clapped into prison" by way of commencement of hostilities, and the war begins. Peter immediately makes a levy of one man in four, besides one "valet out of every two belonging to the nobility," makes a solemn declaration of war, and then marches at the head of forty thousand men to the frontier of Turkey. Previously to his departure he makes a public proclamation of his previous marriage to Catharine; and the Empress, despite his earnest remonstrances, accompanies the invading army.

It is strange that the Czar on this expedition should have committed the same error, and placed himself in almost the same unfortunate predicament, as his adversary Charles. Trusting to the representations and the friendship of the faithless Hospodar of Moldavia, he advances

rapidly at the head of an insufficient force into a hostile and barren country, relying for men and munitions of war upon his ally. Crossing the Pruth, he finds himself near Jassy, in a hostile country between an army of Turks and another of Tartars, with a deep and rapid river between him and his own dominions. Forty thousand Russians are held at bay by two hundred thousand Turks and Tartars. The situation of the Czar is terrible ; annihilation seems to stare him in the face. His enemy Charles visits the Turkish camp in disguise, urging the Czar's destruction upon the Vizier. A destructive battle is going on unceasingly, which in three days costs him eighteen thousand men. Retreat is impossible ; no ally is near him, no succor expected. What can possibly extricate him ? Shall he dash upon the Turks at the head of his remaining forces and cut his way through them, or die, sword in hand, in the attempt ? Shall he surrender to the overwhelming power of the Sultan's army, and be paraded at Constantinople as the captive Czar ? Tortured and perplexed, he shuts himself up alone in his tent and falls into terrible convulsions. None of his generals dare approach him ; he has forbidden an entrance to all. Suddenly, in spite of the prohibition, the captive of Marienburg stands before him. She who at all times possessed a mysterious power to calm the spasmodic affections, half physical, half mental, to which he was subject, now appears before him like an angel to relieve his agony and to point out an escape from impending ruin. She suggests the idea of negotiation, which had occurred to no one in the desperate situation in which they were placed, and which she instinctively prophesied would still be successful. She strips herself of her jewels, and ransacks the camp for

objects of value to form a suitable present for the Grand Vizier. The Vice-Chancellor Shaffiroff is dispatched to the enemy's camp, and the apparently impossible result is a treaty of peace. Arms are suspended immediately, and soon afterward honorable articles are signed, of which the principal are the surrender of Azov, the exclusion of the Czar from the Black Sea, the demolition of the fortress of Taganrog, the withdrawal of the Russian soldiers from the neighborhood of the Danube, and the promise of free passage to Charles XII. through Russia to his own states.

It is unnecessary to analyse or to criticize the different motives that actuated the Vizier in acceding to an honorable negotiation, when the Czar seemed to be so completely in his power. It is sufficient that this was the surprising and fortunate result of Catharine's counsel. "Her great merit," says Voltaire, "was that she saw the possibility of negotiation at a moment when the generals seem to have seen nothing but an inevitable misfortune." No language can describe the rage and mortification of Charles XII. at this unexpected result—at this apparently impossible escape of his hated rival from overwhelming ruin. Hastening to the camp of the Vizier, he upbraids him, as if he had been his master instead of his stipendiary; he expresses his profound disgust that the Czar has not been carried to Constantinople, instead of being allowed to go home so easily. "And who will govern his empire in his absence?" asked the Vizier, with bitter irony, adding that "it would never to do have all the sovereigns away from home." In answer to this retort, Charles grins ferociously in his face, turns on his heel, and tears the Vizier's robe with his spurs. After thus insulting the great functionary of the Sultan, he continues three years

longer a pensionary upon his bounty. To the reiterated entreaties of his Senate, that he would return, and attend to the pressing exigencies of his kingdom, he replies, in a style worthy of Bombastes, that he would send one of his boots to govern them, and remains at Bender, still deluded and besotted with the idea that he should yet appear with a Turkish force before Moscow. At last, in 1714, after fighting a pitched battle at the head of his valets, grooms, and house-servants, against a considerable Turkish army, sent to dislodge him by force, he is ignominiously expelled from the country whose hospitality he has so long outraged, and returns in the disguise of a courier to Sweden.

The Czar upon his return to his dominions gains a considerable victory over the Swedish fleet in the Baltic, commanding his own in person in a line-of-battle ship of his own building. On arriving at Petersburg he ordains a great triumphal procession to bring the captured ships with their admirals and officers up the Neva. At this time he transfers the Senate from Moscow to Petersburg, establishes assemblies, at which the penalty for infringement of the rules and regulations is to "empty the great eagle, a huge bowl, filled with wine and brandy," institutes the Academy of Arts and Sciences, founds the public library commenced with the one captured ("conveyed, the wise it call") from the University at Abo, sends a mission through Siberia to China, and draws up a map of his dominions, much of it with his own hand.

In 1715, after taking Stralsund, completing the conquest of Finland and Esthonia, and commanding in person the allied fleets of England, Denmark, and Russia, he makes a second tour in Europe, accompanied by Catharine. He

revisits Saardam, where he is received with great enthusiasm, is entertained with great distinction in Paris, and visits the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, where he exclaims, dropping upon his knees, "Thou great man, I would have given thee half of my dominions to have learned of thee to govern the other half." He drew up with his own hand a treaty of commerce with France, and returned through Berlin to Petersburg. The letters of the Margravine of Baireuth from Berlin present no very flattering picture of the imperial travelers. She describes Peter as dressed plainly in a naval costume, handsome, but rude, uncouth, and of dreadful aspect; and Catharine as fat, frouzy, and vulgar, needing only to be seen to betray her obscure origin, and bedizened with chains, orders, and holy relics, "making such a *Geklinkklank* as if an ass with bells were coming along"; she represents them both as intolerable beggars, plundering the palace of everything they could lay their hands on.

Peter had long ago constituted himself the head of the Church, and treated with contempt the pretensions of the prelates to temporal power. When at Paris, however, he had received an elaborate petition from the Sorbonne, the object of which was to effect a reunion between the Greek and Latin Churches. But the despot who had constituted himself the head, hand, heart, and conscience of his people—who had annihilated throughout his empire every element of power adverse to his own—who had crushed the soldiery, the nobility, and the clergy, deposed the Patriarch, and constituted himself the high priest of his empire—was not very likely to comply with the Sorbonne's invitation to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope in his dominions.

Nevertheless, he received their petition with great politeness.

On his return to Petersburg, he was vexed by the importunity of some of his own clergy, who clamored for the appointment of a Patriarch, on the ground that it was demanded by the people, and that it was necessary to assert the dignity and independence of the Greek Church. Now there happened to be about Petersburg one Sotoff, a venerable jester of eighty-four, who had been the Czar's writing-master in his younger years, and at the age of seventy had been advanced to the dignity of buffoon. This venerable individual the Czar fixes upon for the office of Patriarch, previously creating him a prince and a pope. In order to make the office of Patriarch completely ridiculous in the eyes of the people, and to give them a little innocent recreation at the same time, he now ordains a solemn marriage between this Patriarch and a "buxom widow of thirty-four." We must ask indulgence while we quote a short description of this funny ceremony from the old author already cited :

The nuptials of this extraordinary couple were solemnized by the court in masks or mock show. The company consisted of about four hundred persons of both sexes. Every four persons had their proper dress and peculiar musical instruments, so that they represented a hundred different sorts of habits and music, particularly of the Asiatic nations. The four persons appointed to invite the guests were the greatest stammerers that could be found in all Russia. Old, decrepit men, who were not able to walk or stand, had been picked out to serve for bridesmen, stewards, and waiters. There were four running footmen, the most unwieldy fellows, who had been troubled with the gout most of their lives, and were so fat and bulky that they wanted others to lead them. The mock Czar

of Moscow, who represented King David in his dress, instead of a harp, had a lyre with a bear-skin to play upon. He, being the chief of the company, was carried on a sort of a pageant placed on a sled, to the four corners of which were tied as many bears, which, being pricked with goads by fellows purposely appointed for it, made such a frightful roaring as well suited the confused and horrible din raised by the disagreeing instruments of the rest of the company. The Czar himself was dressed like a boor of Friesland, and skillfully beat a drum in company with three generals. In this manner, bells ringing everywhere, the ill-matched couple were attended by the masks to the altar of the great church, where they were joined in matrimony by a priest a hundred years old, who had lost his eyesight and his memory; to supply which defect a pair of spectacles were put upon his nose, two candles held before his eyes, and the words sounded into his ears, which he was to pronounce. From church the procession went to the Czar's palace, where the diversion lasted some days. Many strange adventures and comical accidents happened on their riding-sleds through the streets, too long to be related here. Thus much may suffice to show that the Czar, among all the heavy cares of government, knew how to set apart some days for the relaxation of his mind, and how ingenious he was in the contrivance of those diversions.

We confess that we are unable to agree with the grave conclusion of the author from whom we quote. To us this "ingenious diversion" seems about as sorry a jest as we ever heard of. However, it was considered "most admirable fooling" in Moscow, and, at all events, after two or three repetitions, seems to have quite cured the people of their desire for Patriarchs.

"The Czar," says Voltaire, "thus laughingly avenged twenty Emperors of Germany, ten Kings of France, and a host of sovereigns. This was all the fruit which the Sor-

bonne gathered from their not very politic idea of reuniting the Greek and Latin Churches."

The darkest chapter in the life of Peter now approaches. After the lapse of a century, no one can read the account of that dreadful tragedy, the trial, condemnation, and death of the Czarevitch Alexis, without a shudder of horror. No one can contemplate the spectacle of a son judicially condemned by his father for no crime—no one can read the record of the solemn farce which represents the trial of the unfortunate victim without feeling all his admiration for the extraordinary qualities of the Czar swallowed up by indignation and abhorrence. Up to this time Peter seems a man—a hard-hearted, despotic, inexorable man, perhaps—but he is still human. He now seems only a machine, a huge engine of unparalleled power, placed upon the earth to effect a certain task, working its mighty arms night and day with ceaseless and untiring energy, crashing through all obstacles, and annihilating everything in its path with the unfeeling precision of gigantic mechanism.

It was hardly to be expected, to be sure, that this tremendous despot, who had recoiled before no obstacle in the path of his settled purpose, who had strode over everything with the step of a giant, who had given two seas to an inland empire, who had conquered the most warlike nation and sovereign of Europe with barbarians in petticoats, who had crushed the nobility, annihilated the Janizaries, trampled the Patriarch in the dust—who had repudiated his wife because she was attached to the old customs of Muscovy, and had married and crowned a pastry-cook's mistress because it was his sovereign will and pleasure—it was hardly to be expected that such a man would hesitate

about disinheriting his own son if he thought proper to do so. But it might have been hoped that he would content himself with disinheriting him, and that the "*Pater Patriæ*," as by solemn decree he was shortly afterward entitled, would remember that he was also father of Alexis.

This unhappy young man, the son of the repudiated wife of the Czar, seems to have been a very miserable creature. We have the fullest sympathy with the natural disappointment of Peter at the incorrigible, hopeless stupidity and profligacy of his son. Still, he had himself to blame in a great measure for many of his son's defects. His education had been neglected, or rather, worse than neglected; it had been left to the care of monks, to the care of the very order of people most wedded to the ancient state of things, and most desirous of restoring it if possible. The necessary result of such training upon a dull boy might easily have been foreseen. There was, however, not the slightest objection to disinheriting him; he had no claim to the throne, and he was totally unworthy of it. There was no law of Russia designating the eldest son as successor. On the contrary, the genius of the Russian autocracy seems to vest the fee simple of all the Russias and all the Russians in the actual autocrat, to be disposed of as he sees fit, and devised to whomsoever he deems most eligible. This had been, and was then, the law, if it be worth while to talk about law when the will of the sovereign makes and alters the law at any moment. Alexis seems to have been weak, dissolute, and intriguing—a sot, a bigot, a liar, and a coward—the tool of "bushy-bearded" priests and designing women, whose control of the empire had been terminated by Peter's energetic measures. The Czar's predominating

fear was that at his death the empire would relapse into the quagmire of barbarism from which he had reclaimed it. Alexis, priest-ridden and ignorant, was sure to become a tool in the hands of priests as soon as he should ascend the throne, and the old order of things would as surely be reinstated.

Peter, soon after the death of his son's wife (a virtuous and intelligent German princess, whose life seems to have been worn out by the neglect, cruelty, and debauchery of her husband), remonstrates with him upon his evil courses, commands him to reform, and threatens else to disinherit him. "Amend your life, or else turn monk," says the Czar. "I intend to embrace the monastic life," replies the son; "I pledge myself to do so, and only ask your gracious permission." The Czar, just before his departure for Germany and France, visits Alexis, who was, or pretended to be, confined to his bed by sickness. The young man again renews his renunciation of the succession and repeats his pledge to become a monk. Peter bids him take six months to consider the matter, takes an affectionate farewell of him, and sets out upon his travels. As soon as his back is turned, Alexis realizes the old distich :

"The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be ;
The devil got well, the devil a monk was he."

He recovers his health instantaneously, and celebrates his father's departure by getting very drunk with a select party of friends. Seven months afterward the Czar writes to him to join him at Copenhagen, if he had determined to reform his life and make himself fit for the succession ; if not, to execute his monastic plans without delay. Alexis

accordingly announces his intention of going to Copenhagen, draws a heavy bill on Menshikoff for his traveling expenses, leaves Moscow, and, instead of Copenhagen, sneaks off to Vienna. The Emperor of Germany, however, turns him off, and he goes to Naples. Two envoys of the Czar, Tolstoy and Romanzoff, proceed to Naples and induce him, by ample promises of forgiveness on the part of his father, to return. The following is a part of his father's letter :

I write to you for the last time, to tell you that you are to execute my will, which Tolstoy and Romanzoff will announce to you on my part. *If you obey me, I assure you and I promise, in the name of God, that I will not punish you, and that, if you return, I will love you more than ever ;* but if you do not, I give you as your father, in virtue of, the power which I have received from God, my eternal curse ; and as your sovereign, I assure you that I shall find the means of punishing you ; in which I hope that God will assist me, and that he will take my just cause in his hand.

Upon the faith of this sacred promise Alexis accompanies the two emissaries to Moscow, where they arrive on the 13th of February, 1718. The day after his arrival, the Czar, by way of keeping his promise of pardoning and loving him more than ever, calls a grand council of the Senate and all the dignitaries of the empire, and there, in the most solemn, formal, and authentic manner, disinherits Alexis, deprives him of all claim to the succession, and obliges him, and all those present, to take the oath of future allegiance to his and Catharine's son Peter, then an infant, who, however, shortly afterward died. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of his promise ; but it was only the beginning of the end. Alexis was worthless, ignorant, stupid, and depraved ; but he had committed no crime, and deserved no punishment,

certainly not the punishment of death. A comfortable state of things there would be in the world, if every man who happened to have a profligate dunce of a son were to be justified in cutting his head off; and for an autocrat and high priest to do so seems to us a thousand times more atrocious.

However, the Czar seems to have been determined, after his first evasion, to get rid of him, and accordingly produces the charge of a conspiracy. Alexis is formally accused of conspiring against his father's life and throne, and a pack of perfectly contemptible stuff is collected together to make what was called evidence; it consisted of confessions of his mistress, his pot-companions, and his confessor—all upon the rack—that he had been known to express wishes for his father's death, and to throw out hints about receiving assistance, in a certain event, from the Emperor of Germany. But in the whole mess of it there is not the faintest shadow of a shade of evidence that he had ever conspired, that he had ever entertained any design against his father; and the necessary result, upon any candid mind, of a perusal of the evidence is a conviction of his perfect innocence of the crime charged upon him. There is not a country in the world where there is any pretense of administering justice, in which such an accusation, supported by such evidence, would not have been hooted out of court. Still, the accusation was made, and something which they called a trial was instituted. The Prince is sworn upon the Holy Evangelists to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and he immediately begins to utter lies by the wholesale. His weak intellect seems to have been possessed and disordered by one idea—that if he should confess a great deal more than was expected, and make himself out much more

guilty than he was supposed to be, he should perhaps obtain his pardon. Having, however, done nothing criminal, and having said nothing that could be fairly considered suspicious, he dives into the bottom of his breast, and brings up and displays his most secret thoughts by way of self-accusation. The truth seems to have been that he was bullied to the last degree. We know the Czar to have been a man who eminently inspired awe, and Alexis was of an uncommonly sneaking disposition. As the event proved, Peter absolutely frightened his son to death. Certainly, never were the forms of judicial investigation so outraged as in this trial. The details are sickening, and we have already transgressed the indulgence of our readers. Let one or two questions, made by the prosecution, and answered by the criminal in writing, suffice as specimens of the Czar's criminal jurisprudence :

"When you saw, in the letter of Beyer" (a gossiping envoy from the German Emperor's court, who wrote to his sovereign all the news, true or false, as fast as he picked it up), "that there was a revolt in the army of Mecklenburg, you were rejoiced ; I believe that you had some view, and that you would have declared for the rebels, even in my lifetime." The answer of Alexis is, "*If the rebels had called me in your lifetime, I should probably have joined them, supposing that they had been strong enough.*" In answer to another question, he avows that "he had accused himself before God, in confession to the priest Jacques, of having wished the death of his father ; and that the confessor Jacques had replied : 'God will pardon you for it ; we all wish it as much.'"

After this farce of a trial had been enacted, the Czar, waiving his prerogative of life and death, determined to sub-

mit the case to the judgment of the clergy, judges, and high officers of state. This always seemed to us very paltry. It was an attempt to shift the responsibility of the murder off his own shoulders, where only it belonged. The council of clergy, after recognizing the Czar's power—*jus vitæ et necis*—which nobody ever doubted, and citing several cases from the Old Testament, recommended mercy, relying principally upon Absalom's case. It was plain they washed their hands of it. Meantime, further investigations, it was pretended, had made the matter worse; and, on the 5th of July, the ministers, senators, and generals unanimously condemn the Prince to death, leaving the sentence, of course, open to the Czar's revision, and prescribing no particular mode of execution. The sentence of death is published, Alexis is informed of it, and seems literally to have been frightened to death by it; for, while the Czar was deliberating what course to take (and the opinion of the most indulgent—we confess not ours—seems to be that he did not intend the execution of the sentence), the unfortunate young man was carried off by a kind of apoplectic seizure, and, on the 7th of July, died contrite, receiving the sacrament and extreme unction, and imploring his father's pardon.

This account seems to be now accepted as the true one. But the Marquis de Custine, in his greediness to devour everything that blackens the character of Russia in general, and of Peter the Great in particular, could not, of course, fail to reproduce the stories that have been told and retold, exploded and reexploded—and which will continue, we suppose, to be told and exploded, believed in and ridiculed, to the end of time. It was not believed by many people in Europe at the time, and it is not believed by the Comte de

Ségur and the Marquis de Custine now, that the Prince died a natural death—if the cataleptic convulsive fit, consequent upon extreme and protracted mental agony, which finally ended his life, can be called a natural and not a violent death. All sorts of stories were told at the time, each more incredible than the other, and each disproving the other. The Czar was said to have knouted him to death with his own hands—to have poisoned him with a potion which he sent Marshal Weyde to an apothecary's shop in broad daylight to procure—to have cut off his head, and then to have had it privately sewed on again by Madame Cramer—in short, to have made away with him by a variety of means, all of which could not well have been true, and all of which are, under the circumstances, extremely unlikely. To us it seems ridiculous to add a new horror to this terrible tragedy. We are not sure, either, that the supposed assassination makes the matter any worse. "Murder most foul as at the best it is," we are unable to see that the private murder is a whit more atrocious than the public, solemn, and judicial murder of which the Czar stands accused and condemned to all eternity.

It certainly does not seem to have been in Peter's nature to have taken his son off by poison, or in any private way. The autocrat was a man who gloried in his own actions, in displaying the tremendous, irresistible power of his own will. He had collected all the dignity of his empire to assist at the spectacle; he had invoked the attention of all Europe to the tragedy he proposed to enact; he had determined to execute his son, and he did intend, we have no doubt, to murder him in the most ceremonious manner, and for the good of his country. We have not a doubt of his motives;

he thought himself actuated by the purest philanthropy; but these expansive bosoms, which embrace the whole earth, or a third of it, in their colossal affection, are apt to be deficient in the humbler virtues of love and charity when it comes to detail. The truth was, Peter loved his country so well that he determined to sacrifice his son to its welfare; in other words, his heart was as hard as the nether millstone, and he would have sacrificed twenty thousand sons rather than have been thwarted in the cherished projects of his ambitious intellect. But we confess we can conceive of no motive for the alleged assassination. It was not in the character of the Emperor, and it was a piece of stupidity as well as barbarity. "If the assassination had trammelled up the consequence" of all that preceded, "then it, were well"; and the deed might have been possible. But the broken faith to his son, the atrocious trial, the deliberate condemnation, could in no manner have been obliterated from the minds of men by the "deep damnation" of a secret "taking off." He had announced to the world his intention of executing his son for alleged disobedience and conspiracy; he had sent to every court in Europe copies of the judicial proceedings, ending in the condemnation of the victim; he had been publicly brandishing the sword of justice over his son's neck, and calling upon the world to witness the spectacle; and why he should have made all this parade for the mere purpose of poisoning him, knouting him, or cutting his head off in secret, seems inexplicable.

Besides, as Voltaire very strongly urges, the different kinds of assassination alleged disprove each other, and the fact that Alexis was never alone from the moment of the condemnation to the hour of his death makes any secret

execution impossible. The knouting story has not found many advocates; the poisoning and the beheading are supported about equally, and are both about equally probable. It certainly was not probable that the Czar would have sent a high officer of court to fetch the poison, and a few minutes afterward have dispatched another messenger to bid the first make great haste. This is not exactly the way in which poisoning is usually managed. And the other story, that the young man's head was cut off and then sewed on again, is so ludicrous that it would deserve no attention but for the number of writers who have reported it upon the authority of contemporaneous gossip. At what moment the Czar found a secret opportunity to cut the head off—how Madam Cramer found a secret opportunity to sew it on again—how this ingenious lady, who, we suppose, had not practiced this kind of needlework as a profession, was able to fit it on so adroitly as to deceive not only the whole court but even the patient himself, for, as far as we can understand the story, Alexis seems to have received extreme unction and the sacrament, in presence of about a hundred witnesses, after Mrs. Cramer's job was finished—are all matters very difficult to explain. Moreover, as we have already observed, we do not see much greater atrocity in the one case than in the other. Peter's will being the only law of the land, he could do what he chose, execute his son as he chose, and by his own hand if he chose. The only law which could have any binding force over the autocrat was the law of nature, and that, to his soul of granite, was weaker than the spider's web. He was determined to sacrifice his son to the welfare of his country, and to insure the continuance of his reformation in church and state. Sacri-

fices of this sort have always found advocates and admirers, and are sure to be repeated on great occasions, and at rare intervals, to the end of time.

Dismissing this painful subject, we hasten to conclude this imperfect sketch of the principal events in the Czar's history. We will not dwell upon the extraordinary but abortive intrigues of the two arch-plotters of Europe, Cardinal Alberoni and Baron Görtz, by which the Czar and the Swedish monarch were to be reconciled and combined in a plot against George I. of England, and in favor of the Pretender. A chance bullet from "a petty fortress and a dubious hand" at Frederikshald, in Norway, terminates at once the life of Charles and the intrigues of Görtz. The Baron, instead of taking the crown from George's head, loses his own head at Stockholm; Alberoni is turned out of Spain; and the Czar remains *in statu quo*, having been careful throughout the whole intrigue, which was perfectly well known in England, to make the most barefaced promises of eternal friendship to the house of Hanover; and "to reiterate," as the diplomatists say, "the assurances of his distinguished consideration" for the English King all the time that he was plotting against his throne.

The death of Charles alters the complexion of Europe. Peace, which was hardly possible during his lifetime, becomes the immediate object of all parties. The Prince of Hesse, husband of Queen Ulrica, and, by cession of his wife, King of Sweden, is desirous of peace upon almost any terms which will allow of an honorable repose to his exhausted and impoverished country. Peter, having obtained possession of all the provinces he required, is ready to sheathe the sword on receiving proper recognition of his

title to the property thus acquired; and accordingly, after a good deal of bravado upon the Baltic between the English and Russian fleets, and the burning of some fifty or sixty Swedish villages, innumerable châteaux, and fifteen or twenty thousand houses, in a descent made by the Russians upon the coasts of Sweden, the war, which continues with ferocity during all the negotiations for peace, is at last brought to a conclusion by the signing of the treaty of Neustadt, on September 10, 1721. By this treaty of peace, the Czar is guaranteed in the possession of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, Viborg, and the many adjacent islands, and thus reaps the reward of twenty years' hard labor; receiving, moreover, from the Senate and Synod, by solemn decree—what seems insipid homage for an autocrat—the titles of Great, Emperor, and *Pater Patriæ*.

After an interval of two years, passed in establishing woolen, paper, and glass manufactories, embellishing his capital, and regulating the internal and foreign commerce of Russia, we suddenly find him, accompanied by the faithful Catharine, descending the Volga at the head of a large army. A revolution which had broken out in Persia, in the course of which the reigning sovereign, the imbecile Hussein, finds himself hard pressed by the Afghan prince, Meer Mahmoud, offers an opportunity to Peter to possess himself of a few maritime provinces on the Caspian, to console him for the loss of Azov consequent upon the disaster of the Pruth. A few hundred Russians, engaged in commerce at the town of Shamakia, having been cut to pieces during some of the hostile movements, he finds therein a pretext for invading Persia, and requiring satisfaction from both sovereign and rebel. Failing in this, of course, he sails

from Astrakhan to Derbent, which town he takes possession of, and, soon afterward, being applied to by the unhappy Sophi for protection against the Afghans, he consents to afford it, in consideration of receiving the towns of Baku and Derbent, together with the provinces of Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Astrabad. "It is not land I want, but water," exclaims the Czar, as he snatches these sunny provinces, the whole southern coast of the Caspian, the original kingdom of Cyrus, from the languid hand of the Persian, without the expenditure of the blood, time, and treasure which it had cost him to wrest the frozen swamps of Finland from the iron grasp of Charles.

Peter's conquests are now concluded. The Russian colossus now stands astride, from the "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice" on the Baltic to the "fragrant bowers of Astrabad" on the Caspian, with a foot upon either sea. The man who had begun to gratify his passion for maritime affairs by paddling a little skiff on the Yausa, and who became on his accession only the barbaric sovereign of an inland and unknown country, now finds himself the lord of two seas, with a considerable navy, built almost by his own hand. It was upon his return to Petersburg from his Persian expedition, that he ordered the very skiff in which he commenced navigation to be brought from Moscow, and took occasion to give to his court an entertainment which was called the "consecration of the Little Grandsire," that being the name he had given to the skiff. At the time of this ceremony of the consecration, the progeny of the Little Grandsire numbered already, according to the returns of the admiralty, "forty-one ships of the line, in a condition for service at sea, carrying twenty-one hun-

dred and six guns, manned with fourteen thousand nine hundred seamen, besides a proportionate number of frigates, galleys, and other smaller craft." The little cabin which was Peter's house while building Petersburg, still stands upon what is now called the Citadel; it is consecrated as a chapel, filled with votive offerings, and inclosed with a brick wall, and the Little Grandsire is religiously preserved within the building.

We are certainly not taken in by the colossal puerility of the Russian marine any more than the Marquis de Custine is; and, although the descendants of the Little Grandsire are now at least double the number they were at the time of the consecration, we have not heard of any very brilliant exploits on any ocean to justify the very imposing and very Roman *rostra* which decorate the exchange at Petersburg. To use a vulgar but expressive phrase, the Russian navy has not yet set the Baltic on fire, and we doubt if it ever will. If it could thaw a little, it would be all the better; for, Cronstadt being blockaded by ice six months in the year, the navy is only paraded during the pleasant weather for the amusement of the autocrat. As long as England stands where it does, and the Russian winter remains as it is, we shall hardly fear much from the descendants of the Little Grandsire, at least till the capital is shifted to the Bosphorus.

At the same time we are far from agreeing with the Marquis de Custine in his sweeping condemnation of Peter's policy in building Petersburg and establishing a marine. It was a thousand times better to have the Black Sea and the Baltic than nothing; and if his successors had taken half as much pains as himself in fostering the maritime

trade of the country, and if Russia, instead of all this parade of ships of the line, frigates, and steamers, could create a mercantile marine for itself, and could manage its own considerable foreign trade, now monopolized by foreign vessels, principally the English, she might still obtain the germ of a maritime population while waiting for Constantinople. But till she learns that the strength of a navy consists in sailors and not ships she is not likely to be a very formidable power upon the ocean, let her build as many line-of-battle ships as she chooses.

The only other interesting incident in Peter's life, which now draws rapidly to its close, was the coronation of Catharine as Empress consort. This event was celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and particular stress is laid in the Emperor's proclamation upon her conduct in the affair of the Pruth, and the salvation of himself and his army is attributed to her heroism and presence of mind. There seems to be little doubt that Peter intended this solemn coronation of the Empress during his lifetime—a ceremony which was not usual in Russia—to be an indication of his intention that she should succeed to the throne upon his death.

Very soon after this, having exposed himself when in a feeble state of health by standing in the water a long time and over-exerting himself in saving the lives of some sailors and soldiers who were near being wrecked in a storm upon the Gulf of Finland, he was attacked by a painful disorder, to which he had been subject during the latter years of his life, and expired with calmness and resignation on the 28th of January, 1725. His sufferings during his last illness had been so intense that he was unable to make any intelli-

gible disposition as to the succession ; and, strange to say, the possessor of this mighty empire, of which the only fundamental law was the expressed will of the sovereign, died intestate. It is in the highest degree probable that he had intended to appoint his wife as his successor ; at any rate, assisted by the promptness of Menshikoff and her own resolution, Catharine ascended the throne without opposition.

The disorder which thus cut off the Czar in the fifty-fourth year of his age was an acute inflammation of the intestines and bladder ; but, as a matter of course, his death was attributed to poison. We do not observe that the Marquis de Custine has revived this story, which is matter of surprise to us, particularly as we believe that his friend the Comte de Ségur has adopted it in his history. The temptation to damage the character of the Empress, and to represent her to posterity as an adulteress and a poisoner, was too strong to be resisted by the contemporary chroniclers. Lamberti gives us a detailed account of an intrigue of Catharine with one of her chamberlains, a melodramatic discovery made by Peter in an arbor, and a consequent determination upon his part to shut her up for life in a convent. She escaped her fate, according to the same faithful historian, in a singular manner. Peter, it appears, kept a memorandum-book, and was in the habit of making daily minutes of everything he proposed to do ; while one of Catharine's pages was in the habit of secretly bringing his Majesty's tablets from his dressing-room for the daily inspection of the Empress. The intended imprisonment of Catharine, jotted down among other memoranda, was thus revealed to her, whereupon she incontinently poisoned him. This story has been sufficiently disproved. It is hardly

worth disproving; for it is not probable that a man who had suddenly made this discovery of the guilt of a woman who had just been crowned as empress, and whom he had now determined to imprison for life, instead of designating her as his successor, would require to make any memorandum of the matter. And yet we are expected to believe that an entry was found upon Peter's tablets almost literally to this effect: "*Mem.* To repudiate my wife, shave her head, and lock her up in a convent"; as if otherwise the matter would have slipped his memory. How is it possible that our friend De Custine has allowed this story to escape him?

In the vast square of the Admiralty at St. Petersburg stands the celebrated colossal statue of Peter the Great: Around him are palaces, academies, arsenals, gorgeous temples with their light and starry cupolas floating up like painted balloons, and tall spires sheathed in gold, and flashing like pillars of fire. This place, which is large enough for half the Russian army to encamp in, is bounded upon one side by the Admiralty building, the Winter Palace, and the Hermitage, the façades of the three extending more than a mile; in front of the Winter Palace rises the red, polished granite column of Alexander, the largest monolith in the world; from the side opposite the palace radiate three great streets lined with stately and imposing buildings, thronged with population, and intersected by canals which are all bridged with iron; across the square, on the side opposite the statue, stands the Isaac's Church, built of marble, bronze, granite, and gold, and standing upon a subterranean forest, more than a million large trees having been driven into the earth to form its foundation. The Emperor

faces the Neva, which pours its limpid waters through quays of solid granite, which for twenty-five miles line its length and that of its branches; and beyond the river rise in full view the Bourse, the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and other imposing public edifices.

This equestrian statue has been much admired; we think justly so. The action of the horse is uncommonly spirited and striking, and the position of the Emperor dignified and natural. He waves his hand, as if, like a Scythian wizard as he was, he had just caused this mighty, swarming city, with all its palaces and temples, to rise like a vapor from the frozen morasses of the Neva with one stroke of his wand. In winter, by moonlight, when the whole scene is lighted by the still, cold radiance of a polar midnight, we defy any one to pause and gaze upon that statue without a vague sensation of awe. The Czar seems to be still presiding in sculptured silence over the colossal work of his hand; to be still protecting his capital from the inundations of the ocean, and his empire from the flood of barbarism, which he always feared would sweep over it upon his death.

“How shall we rank him upon glory’s page?”

It is impossible not to admire his genius, his indomitable energy, his unconquerable will. He proposed to himself, while yet a youth, the mighty task of civilizing his country, and of converting a mongrel Asiatic empire into a powerful European state. It is difficult to place one’s self in the right position to judge him correctly. We are very far from agreeing with the Marquis de Custine, that his mistake was in importing his civilization. Russia had waited in vain quite long enough for the spontaneous and indigenous ger-

mination of the arts and sciences. Besides, in these days when steam is so rapidly approximating and assimilating the different parts of the earth to each other, when railroads are opened to the Red Sea, and steamers paddle by the Garden of Eden, it is difficult to say what nation will long retain a peculiar and appropriate civilization of its own. That the Czar opened the door to Europe and the ocean, that he erected a granite portal, a triumphal arch, upon his western frontier, is to us his greatest merit. If Russia is to be civilized, it must be through the influence of the West; if Russia is to be free, the hymn of liberty will never be wafted to her ears from the silent deserts of Asia, or the sepulchral stillness of China. The Emperor did right to descend from his Slavonic throne, and to go abroad to light the torch of civilization in more favored lands.

But while we admire the concentration of purpose which sustained him throughout his labors, we can not help deploring the great and fundamental mistake which made them all comparatively worthless. A despot by birth, education, and temperament, he had never the most glimmering notion of the existence of a people. In Russia, then and at this day, there is not even the fiction of a people. Peter had a correct idea of the proper sources of civilization: he knew where and how to collect the seeds; but he forgot that there was nobody to civilize. A people may be humanized, cultivated, brought to any degree of perfection in arts, and arms, and sciences; but he undertook to civilize a state in which there was but one man, and that man himself. The root must grow before the branches and the foliage. Of this the autocrat had no idea. He had already annihilated the only class which was not composed of slaves. With one

stroke of his scepter he had demolished the feudal nobility, or what corresponded in a degree to the feudal nobility of Europe, and had made all social rank throughout his empire to depend upon service to himself. What was accomplished at a later day in western Europe, in the midst of long convulsions and struggles, by the upheaving of the democracy, was effected by the autocrat at a blow. This was a fatal error. There were slaves enough before. It was unnecessary to degrade the nobles. But, the more closely we analyze Peter's character, the more cogently we are compelled to conclude that his actuating motive was rather his own fame than the good of his country. A great peculiarity of his ambition was that, though possessed of eminent military talents and highly successful in his campaigns, he seems to have cared but little for the *certaminis gaudia* ; to have taken but small delight in battles and victories for themselves ; to have cared little for conquest, beyond what he required for his settled purpose. Conquering, he never aspires to be a conqueror ; victorious over the greatest general of the age, he is ready to sheathe his sword as soon as the object of the contest is attained. His ambition was to be a founder, and he never, in victory or defeat, was once turned aside from his purpose. He was determined to advance his empire to the ocean, to create a new capital, and to implant there and throughout his empire the elements of European civilization. If his ambition had flown a little higher, had he determined to regenerate his people, the real civilization of his empire would have followed sooner than it is now likely to do. Of this he probably never dreamed. He was a despot throughout. He might have found other matters in England worthy of his attention, other institutions as intimately con-

nected with civilization as the English naval architecture; but he appears to have been completely indifferent to the great spectacle presented to an autocrat by a constitutional kingdom. "Are these all lawyers?" said he, one day, when visiting the courts at Westminster. "What can be the use of so many lawyers? I have but two in my empire, and I mean to hang one of them as soon as I get back." He certainly might as well have hung them both; a country without law has very little need of lawyers.

It was because his country was inhabited by slaves, and not by a people, that it was necessary, in every branch of his great undertaking, to go into such infinitesimal details. Our admiration of the man's power is, to be sure, increased by a contemplation of the extraordinary versatility of his genius, its wide grasp, and its minute perception; but we regret to see so much elephantine labor thrown away. As he felt himself to be the only man in the empire, so in his power of labor he rises to a demigod, a Hercules. He felt that he must do everything himself, and he did everything. He fills every military post, from drummer to general, from cabin-boy to admiral; with his own hand he builds ships of the line, and navigates them himself in storm and battle; he superintends every manufactory, every academy, every hospital, every prison; with his own hand he pulls teeth and draws up commercial treaties—wins all his battles with his own sword, at the head of his army, and sings in the choir as chief bishop and head of his church—models all his forts, sounds all his harbors, draws maps of his own dominions, all with his own hand—regulates the treasury of his empire and the account-books of his shopkeepers, teaches his subjects how to behave themselves in assemblies, prescribes the

length of their coat-skirts, and dictates their religious creed. If, instead of contenting himself with slaves who only aped civilization, he had striven to create a people capable and worthy of culture, he might have spared himself all these minute details; he would have produced less striking, instantaneous effects, but his work would have been more durable, and his fame more elevated. His was one of the monarch minds, who coin their age and stamp it with their image and superscription; but his glory would have been greater if he had thought less of himself, and more of the real interests of his country. If he had attempted to convert his subjects from cattle into men, he need not have been so eternally haunted by the phantom of returning barbarism, destroying after his death all the labor of his lifetime, and which he could exorcise only by shedding the blood of his son. Viewed from this position, his colossal grandeur dwindles. It seems to us that he might have been so much more, that his possible seem to dwarf his actual achievements. He might have been the creator and the lawgiver of a people. He was, after all, only a tyrant and a city-builder. Even now, his successors avert their eyes from the West. The city of his love is already in danger from more potent elements than water. New and dangerous ideas fly through that magnificent western gateway. When the portal is closed, the keys thrown into the Baltic, and the discarded Moscow again embraced, how much fruit will be left from the foreign seeds transplanted? When the Byzantine Empire is restored, perhaps we shall see their ripened development; the Russians of the Lower Empire will be a match for the Greeks who preceded them.

Still, we repeat, it is difficult to judge him justly. He

seems to have felt a certain mission confided to him by a superior power. His object he accomplished without wavering, without precipitation, without delay. We look up to him as to a giant, as we see him striding over every adversary, over every obstacle in his path. He seems in advance of his country, of his age, of himself. In his exterior he is the great prince, conqueror, reformer; in his interior, the Muscovite, the barbarian. He was conscious of it himself. "I wish to reform my empire," he exclaimed, upon one occasion, "and I can not reform myself." In early life his pleasures were of the grossest character; he was a hard drinker, and was quarrelsome in his cups. He kicked and cuffed his ministers, on one occasion was near cutting the throat of Lefort in a paroxysm of drunken anger, and was habitually caning Prince Menshikoff. But, after all, he did reform himself, and, in the latter years of his life, his habits were abstemious and simple, and his days and nights were passed in labors for his country and his fame.

It is difficult to judge him justly. Perhaps it would have been impossible to have planted even the germ of civil or even social liberty in such a wilderness as Russia was at his accession. It was something to lift her ever so little above the waves of barbarism, where he found her "many fathoms deep." He accomplished a great deal. He made Russia a maritime country, gave her a navy and a commercial capital, and quadrupled her revenue; he destroyed the Strelitzes, he crushed the Patriarch, he abolished the monastic institutions of his empire. If he had done nothing else, he would, for these great achievements, deserve the eternal gratitude of his country.

*THE NORTHMEN.**

WE are misers in knowledge as in wealth. Open inexhaustible mines to us on every hand, yet we return to grope in the exhausted stream of past opulence, and sift its sands for ore; place us in an age when history pours in upon us like an inundation, and the events of a century are crowded into a luster; yet we tenaciously hold on to the scanty records of foregone times, and often neglect the all-important present to discuss the possibility of the almost forgotten past.

It is worthy of remark that this passion for the antiquated and the obsolete appears to be felt with increasing force in this country. It may be asked, What sympathies can the native of a land where everything is in its youth and freshness have with the antiquities of the ancient hemisphere? What inducement can he have to turn from the animated scene around him, and the brilliant perspective that breaks upon his imagination, to wander among the moldering monuments of the olden world, and to call up its shadowy lines of kings and warriors from the dim twilight of tradition?

* History of the Northmen, or Danes and Normans. By Henry Wheaton. London. 8vo. 1831.

“ Why seeks he, with unwearied toil,
Through death’s dark walls to urge his way,
Reclaim his long-asserted spoil,
And lead oblivion into day ? ”

We answer that he is captivated by the powerful charm of contrast. Accustomed to a land where everything is bursting into life, and history itself but in its dawning, antiquity has, in fact, for him the effect of novelty; and the fading but mellow glories of the past, which linger in the horizon of the Old World, relieve the eye, after being dazzled with the rising rays which sparkle up the firmament of the New.

It is a mistake, too, that the political faith of a republican requires him on all occasions to declaim with bigot heat against the stately and traditional ceremonials, the storied pomps and pageants of other forms of government; or even prevents him from at times viewing them with interest, as matters worthy of curious investigation. Independently of the themes they present for historical and philosophical inquiry, he may regard them with a picturesque and poetical eye, as he regards the Gothic edifices rich with the elaborate ornaments of a gorgeous and intricate style of architecture, without wishing to exchange therefor the stern but proud simplicity of his own habitation; or, as he admires the romantic keeps and castles of chivalrous and feudal times, without desiring to revive the dangerous customs and warlike days in which they originated. To him the whole pageantry of emperors and kings, and nobles and titled knights, is, as it were, a species of poetical machinery, addressing itself to his imagination, but no more affecting his faith than does the machinery of the heathen mythology

affect the orthodoxy of the scholar who delights in the strains of Homer and Virgil, and wanders with enthusiasm among the crumbling temples and sculptured deities of Greece and Rome; or do the fairy mythology of the East and the demonology of the North impair the Christian faith of the poet or the novelist who interweaves them in his fictions.

We have been betrayed into these remarks, in considering the work before us, where we find one of our countrymen, and a thorough republican, investigating with minute attention some of the most antiquated and dubious tracts of European history, and treating of some of its exhausted and almost forgotten dynasties; yet evincing throughout the enthusiasm of an antiquarian, the liberality of a scholar, and the enlightened toleration of a citizen of the world.

The author of the work before us, Mr. Henry Wheaton, has for some years filled the situation of *chargé d'affaires* at the court of Denmark. Since he has resided at Copenhagen, he has been led into a course of literary and historic research, which has ended in the production of the present history of those Gothic and Teutonic people who, inhabiting the northern regions of Europe, have so often and so successfully made inroads into other countries more genial in climate and abundant in wealth. A considerable part of his book consists of what may be called conjectural or critical history, relating to remote and obscure periods of time previous to the introduction of Christianity, historiography, and the use of Roman letters among those northern nations. At the outset, therefore, it assumes something of an austere and antiquarian air, which may daunt and discourage that class of readers who are accustomed to find history carefully

laid out in easy, rambling walks through agreeable landscapes, where just enough of the original roughness is left to produce the picturesque and romantic. Those, however, who have the courage to penetrate the dark and shadowy boundary of our author's work, grimly beset with hyperborean horrors, will find it resembling one of those enchanted forests described in northern poetry—embosoming regions of wonder and delight for such as have the hardihood to achieve the adventure. For our own part, we have been struck with the variety of adventurous incidents crowded into these pages, and with the abundance of that poetical material which is chiefly found in early history; while many of the rude traditions of the Normans, the Saxons, and the Danes have come to us with the captivating charms of early association, recalling the marvelous tales and legends that have delighted us in childhood.

The first seven chapters may be regarded as preliminary to the narrative, or, more strictly, historical part of the book. They trace the scanty knowledge possessed by Greek and Roman antiquity of the Scandinavian north; the earliest migrations from that quarter to the west, and south, and east of Europe; the discovery of Iceland by the Norwegians; with the singular circumstances which rendered that barren and volcanic isle, where ice and fire contend for mastery, the last asylum of pagan faith and Scandinavian literature. In this wild region they lingered until the Latin alphabet superseded the Runic character, when the traditional poetry and oral history of the north were consigned to written records, and rescued from that indiscriminate destruction which overwhelmed them on the Scandinavian continent.

The government of Iceland is described by our author as being more properly a patriarchal aristocracy than a republic; and he observes that the Icelanders, in consequence of their adherence to their ancient religion, cherished and cultivated the language and literature of their ancestors, and brought them to a degree of beauty and perfection which they never reached in the Christianized countries of the North, where the introduction of the learned languages produced feeble and awkward though classical imitation, instead of graceful and national originality.

When, at the end of the tenth century, Christianity was at length introduced into the island, the national literature, though existing only in oral tradition, was full blown, and had attained too strong and deep a root in the affections of the people to be eradicated, and had given a charm and value to the language with which it was identified. The Latin letters, therefore, which accompanied the introduction of the Romish religion, were merely adapted to designate the sounds heretofore expressed by Runic characters, and thus contributed to preserve in Iceland the ancient language of the North when exiled from its parent countries of Scandinavia. To this fidelity to its ancient tongue the rude and inhospitable shores of Iceland owe that charm which gives them an inexhaustible interest in the eyes of the antiquary, and endears them to the imagination of the poet. "The popular superstitions," observes our author, "with which the mythology and poetry of the North are interwoven, continued still to linger in the sequestered glens of this remote island."

The language in itself appears to have been worthy of this preservation, since we are told that "it bears in its

internal structure a strong resemblance to the Latin and Greek, and even to the ancient Persian and Sanskrit, and rivals in copiousness, flexibility, and energy every modern tongue."

Before the introduction of letters all Scandinavian knowledge was perpetuated in oral tradition by their Skalds, who, like the rhapsodists of ancient Greece and the bards of the Celtic tribes, were at once poets and historians. We boast of the encouragement of letters and literary men in these days of refinement; but where are they more honored and rewarded than they were among these barbarians of the North? The Skalds, we are told, were the companions and chroniclers of kings, who entertained them in their trains, enriched them with rewards, and sometimes entered the lists with them in trials of skill in their art. They in a manner bound country to country, and people to people, by a delightful link of union, traveling about as wandering minstrels from land to land, and often performing the office of ambassadors between hostile tribes. While thus applying the gifts of genius to their divine and legitimate ends, by calming the passions of men and harmonizing their feelings into kindly sympathy, they were looked up to with mingled reverence and affection, and a sacred character was attached to their calling. Nay, in such estimation were they held that they occasionally married the daughters of princes, and one of them was actually raised to a throne in the fourth century of the Christian era.

It is true the Skalds were not always treated with equal deference, but were sometimes doomed to experience the usual caprice that attends upon royal patronage. We are told that Canute the Great retained several at his court,

who were munificently rewarded for their encomiastic lays. One of them having composed a short poem in praise of his sovereign, hastened to recite it to him, but found him just rising from table and surrounded by suitors :

The impatient poet craved an audience of the King for his lay, assuring him it was "very short." The wrath of Canute was kindled, and he answered the Skald with a stern look : "Are you not ashamed to do what none but yourself has dared—to write a short poem upon me ? Unless by the hour of dinner to-morrow you produce a *drapa* above thirty strophes long on the same subject, your life shall pay the penalty." The inventive genius of the poet did not desert him ; he produced the required poem, which was of the kind called *Tog-drapa*, and the King liberally rewarded him with fifty marks of silver.

Thus we perceive how the flowers of poetry sprung up and bloomed amid eternal ice and snows. The arts of peace were successfully cultivated by the free and independent Icelanders. Their Arctic isle was not warmed by a Grecian sun, but their hearts glowed with the fire of freedom. The natural divisions of the country by icebergs and lava-streams insulated the people from each other, and the inhabitants of each valley and each hamlet formed, as it were, an independent community. These were again reunited in the general national assembly of the Althing, which might not be unaptly likened to the Amphictyonic Council or Olympic games, where all the tribes of the nation convened to offer the common rites of their religion, to decide their mutual differences, and to listen to the lays of the Skald, which commemorated the exploits of their ancestors. Their pastoral life was diversified by the occupation of fishing. Like the Greeks, too, the sea was their element, but even their shortest voyages bore them much farther from their native shores than the boasted expedition of the Argonauts. Their familiarity with the perils of the ocean, and with the diversified manners and customs of foreign lands, stamped their national char-

acter with bold and original features, which distinguished them from every other people.

The power of oral tradition, in thus transmitting, through a succession of ages, poetical or prose compositions of considerable length, may appear almost incredible to civilized nations accustomed to the art of writing. But it is well known that even after the Homeric poems had been reduced to writing the rhapsodists who had been accustomed to recite them could readily repeat any passage desired. And we have, in our own times, among the Servians, Calmucks, and other barbarous and semi-barbarous nations, examples of heroic and popular poems of great length thus preserved and handed down to posterity. This is more especially the case where there is a perpetual order of men, whose exclusive employment it is to learn and repeat, whose faculty of the memory is thus improved and carried to the highest pitch of perfection, and who are relied upon as historiographers to preserve the national annals. The interesting scene presented this day in every Icelandic family, in the long nights of winter, is a living proof of the existence of this ancient custom. No sooner does the day close than the whole patriarchal family, domestics and all, are seated on their couches in the principal apartment, from the ceiling of which the reading and working lamp is suspended ; and one of the family, selected for that purpose, takes his seat near the lamp, and begins to read some favorite Saga, or it may be the works of Klopstock and Milton (for these have been translated into Icelandic), while all the rest attentively listen, and are at the same time engaged in their respective occupations. From the scarcity of printed books in this poor and sequestered country, in some families the Sagas are recited by those who have committed them to memory, and there are still instances of itinerant orators of this sort, who gain a livelihood during the winter by going about from house to house repeating the stories they have thus learned by heart.

The most prominent feature of Icelandic verse, accord-

ing to our author, is its alliteration. In this respect it resembles the poetry of all rude periods of society. That of the Eastern nations, the Hebrews and the Persians, is full of this ornament; and it is found even among the classic poets of Greece and Rome. These observations of Mr. Wheaton are supported by those of Dr. Henderson,* who states that the fundamental rule in Icelandic poetry required that there should be three words in every couplet having the same initial letter, two of which should be in the former hemistich, and one in the latter. The following translation from Milton is furnished as a specimen :

“ *Vid that Villu’ diup
Vard annum slæga,
Böloerk Bidleikat
Barmi vitis â.*”

“ Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of hell and looked ” . . .

As a specimen of the tales related by the Skalds we may cite that of Sigurd and the beauteous Brynhilda, a royal virgin, who is described as living in a lonely castle, encircled by magic flames.

In the Teutonic lay, Brynhilda is a mere mortal virgin; but in the Icelandic poem she becomes a Valkyria, one of those demi-divinities, servants of Odin or Woden in the Gothic mythology, who were appointed to watch over the fate of battle, and were, as their name betokens, selectors of the slain. They were clothed in armor, and mounted on fleet horses, with drawn swords, and mingled in the shock

* Henderson's Iceland, Edinburgh, 1819, Appendix III.

of battle, choosing the warrior-victims, and conducting them to Valhalla, the hall of Odin, where they joined the banquet of departed heroes, in carousals of mead and beer.

The first interview of the hero and heroine is wildly romantic. Sigurd, journeying toward Franconia, sees a flaming light upon a lofty mountain: he approaches it, and beholds a warrior in full armor asleep upon the ground. On removing the helmet of the slumberer, he discovers the supposed knight to be an Amazon. Her armor clings to her body, so that he is obliged to separate it with his sword. She then arises from her death-like sleep, and apprizes him that he has broken the spell by which she lay entranced. She had been thrown into this lethargic state by Odin, in punishment for having disobeyed his orders. In a combat between two knights she had caused the death of him who should have had the victory.

This romantic tale has been agreeably versified by William Spencer, an elegant and accomplished genius, who has just furnished the world with sufficient proofs of his talents to cause regret that they did not fall to the lot of a more industrious man. We subjoin the fragments of his poem cited by our author:

“ Oh, strange is the bower where Brynhilda reclines,
Around it the watch-fire high bickering shines !
Her couch is of iron, her pillow a shield,
And the maiden’s chaste eyes are in deep slumber sealed ;
Thy charm, dreadful Odin, around her is spread,
From thy wand the dread slumber was poured on her head.
Oh, whilom in battle so bold and so free,
Like a *Vikingr* victorious she roved o’er the sea.

The love-lighting eyes, which are fettered by sleep,
 Have seen the sea-fight raging fierce o'er the deep ;
 And 'mid the dread wounds of the dying and slain,
 The tide of destruction poured wide o'er the plain.

"Who is it that spurs his dark steed at the fire ?
 Who is it whose wishes thus boldly aspire
 To the chamber of shields, where the beautiful maid
 By the spell of the mighty All-Father is laid ?
 It is Sigurd the valiant, the slayer of kings,
 With the spoils of the Dragon, his gold and his rings."

BRYNHILDA.

"Like a Virgin of the Shield I roved o'er the sea,
 My arm was victorious, my valor was free.
 By prowess, by Runic enchantment and song,
 I raised up the weak, and I beat down the strong ;
 I held the young prince 'mid the hurly of war,
 My arm waved around him the charmed scimitar ;
 I saved him in battle, I crowned him in hall,
 Though Odin and Fate had foredoomed him to fall :
 Hence Odin's dread curses were poured on my head ;
 He doomed the undaunted Brynhilda to wed.
 But I vowed the high vow which gods dare not gainsay,
 That the boldest in warfare should bear me away :
 And full well I knew that thou, Sigurd, alone
 Of mortals the boldest in battle hast shone ;
 I knew that none other the furnace could stem
 (So wrought was the spell, and so fierce was the flame),
 Save Sigurd the glorious, the slayer of kings,
 With the spoils of the Dragon, his gold and his rings."

The story in the original runs through several cantos, comprising varied specimens of those antique Gothic compositions which, to use the words of our author—

are not only full of singularly wild and beautiful poetry, and lively pictures of the manners and customs of the heroic age of the ancient North, its patriarchal simplicity, its deadly feuds, and its fanciful superstition, peopling the earth, air, and waters with deities, giants, genii, nymphs, and dwarfs, but there are many exquisite touches of the deepest pathos, to which the human heart beats in unison in every age and in every land.

Many of these hyperborean poems, he remarks, have an Oriental character and coloring in their subjects and imagery, their mythology and their style, bearing internal evidence of their having been composed in remote antiquity, and in regions less removed from the cradle of the human race than the Scandinavian North. "The oldest of this fragmentary poetry," as he finely observes, "may be compared to the gigantic remains, the wrecks of a more ancient world, or to the ruins of Egypt and Hindostan, speaking a more perfect civilization, the glories of which have long since departed.

Our author gives us many curious glances at the popular superstitions of the North, and those poetic and mythic fictions which pervaded the great Scandinavian family of nations. The charmed armor of the warrior; the dragon who keeps a sleepless watch over buried treasure; the spirits or genii that haunt the rocky tops of mountains, or the depths of quiet lakes; and the elves or vagrant demons which wander through forests or by lonely hills; these are found in all the popular superstitions of the North. Dittmarus Blefkenius tells us that the Icelanders believed in domestic spirits, which woke them at night to go and fish; and that all expeditions to which they were thus summoned were eminently fortunate. The water-sprites, originating in

Icelandic poetry, may be traced throughout the north of Europe. The Swedes delight to tell of the *Strömkerl*, or boy of the stream, who haunts the glassy brooks that steal gently through green meadows, and sits on the silver waves at moonlight, playing his harp to the elves who dance on the flowery margin. Scarcely a rivulet in Germany also but has its Nixen, or water-witches, all evidently members of the great Northern family.

Before we leave this enchanted ground, we must make a few observations on the Runic characters, which were regarded with so much awe in days of yore, as locking up darker mysteries and more potent spells than the once redoubtable hieroglyphics of the Egyptians. The Runic alphabet, according to our author, consists properly of sixteen letters. Northern tradition attributes them to Odin, who perhaps brought them into Scandinavia, but they have no resemblance to any of the alphabets of Central Asia. Inscriptions in these characters are still to be seen on rocks and stone monuments in Sweden, and other countries of the North, containing Scandinavian verses in praise of their ancient heroes. They were also engraven on arms, trinkets, amulets, and utensils, and sometimes on the bark of trees, and on wooden tablets, for the purpose of memorials or of epistolary correspondence. In one of the Eddaic poems, Odin is represented as boasting the magic power of the Runic rhymes to heal diseases and counteract poison; to spell-bind the arms of an enemy, to lull the tempest, to stop the career of witches through the air, to raise the dead, and extort from them the secrets of the world of spirits. The reader who may desire to see the letters of this all-potent alphabet, will find them in Mallet's "Northern Antiquities."

In his sixth chapter, Mr. Wheaton gives an account of the religion of Odin, and his migration, with a colony of Scythian Goths, from the banks of the Tanais, in Asia, to the peninsula of Scandinavia, to escape the Roman legions. Without emulating his minute and interesting detail, we will merely and briefly state some of the leading particulars, and refer the curious reader to the pages of his book.

The expedition of this mythological hero is stated to have taken place about seventy years before the Christian era, when Pompey the Great, then Consul of Rome, finished the war with Tigranes and Mithridates, and carried his victorious arms throughout the most important parts of Asia. We quote a description of the wonderful vessel *Skidbladner*, the ship of the gods, in which he made the voyage :

"*Skidbladner*," said one of the *genii*, when interrogated by *Gangler*, "is one of the best ships, and most curiously constructed. It was built by certain dwarfs, who made a present of it to *Freyn*. It is so vast that there is room to hold all the deities with their armor. As soon as the sails are spread, it directs its course, with a favorable breeze, wherever they desire to navigate ; and when they wish to land, such is its marvelous construction, that it can be taken to pieces, rolled up, and put in the pocket." "That is an excellent ship, indeed," replied *Gangler*, "and must have required much science and magic art to construct" (p. 118).

With this very convenient, portable, and pocketable ship, and a crew of Goths of the race of *Sviar*, called by *Tacitus* *Suiones*, the intrepid *Odin* departed from *Scythia*, to escape the domination of the Romans, who were spreading themselves over the world. He took with him also his twelve pontiffs, who were at once priests of religion and judges of the law. Whenever sea or river intervened, he launched his

good ship *Skidbladner*, embarked with his band, and sailed merrily over; then landing, and pocketing the transport, he again put himself at the head of his crew, and marched steadily forward. To add to the facilities of these primitive emigrants, *Odin* was himself a seer and a magician. He could look into futurity; could strike his enemies with deafness, blindness, and sudden panic; could blunt the edge of their weapons, and render his own warriors invisible. He could transform himself into bird, beast, fish, or serpent, and fly to the most distant regions, while his body remained in a trance. He could, with a single word, extinguish fire, control the winds, and bring the dead to life. He carried about with him an embalmed and charmed head, which would reply to his questions, and give him information of what was passing in the remotest lands. He had, moreover, two most gifted and confidential ravens, who had the gift of speech, and would fly, on his behests, to the uttermost parts of the earth. We have only to believe in the supernatural powers of such a leader, provided with such a ship, and such an oracular head, attended by two such marvelously gifted birds, and backed by a throng of stanch and stalwart Gothic followers, and we shall not wonder that he found but little difficulty in making his way to the peninsula of Scandinavia, and in expelling the aboriginal inhabitants, who seem to have been but a diminutive and stunted race; although there are not wanting fabulous narrators who would fain persuade us there were giants among them. They were gradually subdued and reduced to servitude, or driven to the mountains, and subsequently to the desert wilds and fastnesses of *Norrland*, *Lapland*, and *Finland*, where they continued to adhere to that form of polytheism

called fetichism, or the adoration of birds and beasts, stocks and stones, and all the animate and inanimate works of creation.

As to Odin, he introduced into his new dominions the religion he had brought with him from the banks of the Tanais; but, like the early heroes of most barbarous nations, he was destined to become himself an object of adoration; for, though to all appearance he died, and was consumed on a funeral pile, it was said that he was translated to the blissful abode of Godheim, there to enjoy eternal life. In process of time it was declared that, though a mere prophet on earth, he had been an incarnation of the Supreme Deity, and had returned to the sacred hall of Valhalla, the paradise of the brave, where, surrounded by his late companions in arms, he watched over the deeds and destinies of the children of men.

The primitive people who had been conquered by Odin and his followers seem to have been as diminutive in spirit as in form, and withal a rancorous race of little vermin, whose expulsion from their native land awakens but faint sympathy; yet candor compels us to add that their conquerors are not much more entitled to our esteem although their hardy deeds command our admiration. The author gives a slight sketch of the personal peculiarities which discriminated both, extracted from an Eddaic poem, and which is worthy of notice, as accounting, as far as the authority is respected, for some of the diversities in feature and complexion of the Scandinavian races :

The slave cast, descended from the aboriginal Finns, were distinguished from their conquerors by black hair and complexion. . . . The caste of freemen and freeholders, lords of the soil which they

cultivated, and descended from the Gothic conquerors, had reddish hair, fair complexion, and all the traits which peculiarly mark that famous race . . . while the caste of the illustrious Jarls and the Hersen, earls and barons, were distinguished by still fairer hair and skin, and by noble employments and manners ; from these descended the kingly race, skilled in Runic science, in manly exercises, and the military art.

The manners, customs, and superstitions of these Northern people, which afterward, with various modifications, pervaded and stamped an indelible character on so great a part of Europe, deserve to be more particularly mentioned ; and we give a brief view of them, chiefly taken from the work of our author, and partly from other sources. The religion of the early Scandinavians taught the existence of a Supreme Being, called Thor, who ruled over the elements, purified the air with refreshing showers, dispensed health and sickness, wielded the thunder and lightning, and with his celestial weapon, the rainbow, launched unerring arrows at the evil demons. He was worshiped in a primitive but striking manner, amid the solemn majesty of nature, on the tops of mountains, in the depths of primeval forests, or in those groves which rose like natural temples on islands surrounded by the dark waters of lonely and silent lakes. They had, likewise, their minor deities, or genii, whom we have already mentioned, who were supposed to inhabit the sun, the moon, and stars—the regions of the air, the trees, the rocks, the brooks, and mountains of the earth, and to superintend the phenomena of their respective elements. They believed, also, in a future state of torment for the guilty, and of voluptuous and sensual enjoyment for the virtuous.

This primitive religion gave place to more complicated

beliefs. Odin, elevated, as we have shown, into a divinity, was worshiped as the Supreme Deity, and with him was associated his wife Freya; from these are derived our Odens-day—Wodensday or Wednesday—and our Freytag, or Friday. Thor, from whom comes Thursday, was now more limited in his sway, though he still bent the rainbow, launched the thunderbolt, and controlled the seasons. These three were the principal deities, and held assemblies of those of inferior rank and power. The mythology had also its devil, called Loke, a most potent and malignant spirit, and supposed to be the cause of all evil.

By degrees the religious rites of the Northern people became more artificial and ostentatious; they were performed in temples with something of Asiatic pomp. Festivals were introduced of symbolical and mystic import, at the summer and the winter solstice, and at various other periods, in which were typified not merely the decline and renovation of nature and the changes of the seasons, but the epochs in the moral history of man. As the ceremonials of religion became more dark and mysterious, they assumed a cruel and sanguinary character; prisoners taken in battle were sacrificed by the victors, subjects by their kings, and sometimes even children by their parents. Superstition gradually spread its illusions over all the phenomena of nature, and gave each some occult meaning; oracles, lots, auguries, and divination gained implicit faith; and soothsayers read the decrees of fate in the flight of birds, the sound of thunder, and the entrails of the victim. Every man was supposed to have his attendant spirit, his destiny which it was out of his power to avert, and his appointed hour to die; Odin, however, could control or alter the destiny of a mortal, and

defer the fatal hour. It was believed, also, that a man's life might be prolonged if another would devote himself to death in his stead.

The belief in magic was the natural attendant upon these superstitions. Charms and spells were practiced, and the Runic rhymes, known but to the gifted few, acquired their reputation among the ignorant multitude for an all-potent and terrific influence over the secrets of nature and the actions and destinies of man.

As war was the principal and the only noble occupation of these people, their moral code was suitably brief and stern. After profound devotion to the gods, valor in war was inculcated as the supreme virtue, cowardice as the deadly sin. Those who fell gloriously in war were at once transported to Valhalla, the airy hall of Odin, there to partake of the eternal felicities of the brave. Fighting and feasting, which had constituted their fierce joys on earth, were lavished upon them in this supernal abode. Every day they had combats in the listed field—the rush of steeds, the flash of swords, the shining of lances, and all the maddening tumult and din of battle; helmets and bucklers were riven, horses and riders overthrown, and ghastly wounds exchanged; but at the setting of the sun all was over; victors and vanquished met unscathed in glorious companionship around the festive board of Odin in Valhalla's hall, where they partook of the ample banquet and quaffed full horns of beer and fragrant mead. For the just who did not die in fight a more peaceful but less glorious elysium was provided—a resplendent golden palace, surrounded by verdant meads and shady groves and fields of spontaneous fertility.

The early training of their youth was suited to the

creed of this warlike people. In the tender days of childhood they were gradually hardened by athletic exercises, and nurtured through boyhood in difficult and daring feats. At the age of fifteen they were produced before some public assemblage and presented with a sword, a buckler, and a lance; from that time forth they mingled among men, and were expected to support themselves by hunting or warfare. But though thus early initiated in the rough and dangerous concerns of men, they were prohibited all indulgence with the softer sex until matured in years and vigor.

The weapons of offense were bow and arrow, battle-axe and sword; and the latter was often engraved with some mystic characters, and bore a formidable and vaunting name.

The helmets of the common soldiery were of leather, and their bucklers leather and wood; but warriors of rank had helmets and shields of iron and brass, sometimes richly gilt and decorated; and they wore coats of mail, and occasionally plated armor.

A young chieftain of generous birth received higher endowments than the common class. Besides the hardy exercise of the chase and the other exercises connected with the use of arms, he was initiated betimes into the sacred science of the Runic writing and instructed in the ancient lay, especially if destined for sovereignty, as every king was the pontiff of his people. When a prince had attained the age of eighteen his father usually gave him a small fleet and a band of warriors, and sent him on some marauding voyage, from which it was disgraceful to return with empty hands.

Such was the moral and physical training of the North-

men, which prepared them for that wide and wild career of enterprise and conquest which has left its traces all along the coasts of Europe, and thrown communities and colonies, in the most distant regions, to remain themes of wonder and speculation in after-ages. Actuated by the same roving and predatory spirit which had brought their Scythian ancestors from the banks of the Tanais, and rendered daring navigators by their experience along the stormy coasts of the North, they soon extended their warlike roamings over the ocean and became complete maritime marauders, with whom piracy at sea was equivalent to chivalry on shore and a freebooting cruise to an heroic enterprise.

For a time the barks in which they braved the dangers of the sea and infested the coasts of England and France were mere canoes formed from the trunks of trees, and so light as readily to be carried on men's shoulders or dragged along the land. With these they suddenly swarmed upon a devoted coast, sailing up the rivers, shifting from stream to stream, and often making their way back to the sea by some different river from that which they had ascended. Their chiefs obtained the appellation of sea-kings, because, to the astonished inhabitants of the invaded coasts, they seemed to emerge suddenly from the ocean, and, when they had finished their ravages, to retire again into its bosom as to their native home; and they were rightly named, in the opinion of the author of a northern Saga, seeing that their lives were passed upon the waves, and "they never sought shelter under a roof or drained their drinking-horn at a cottage fire."

Though plunder seemed to be the main object of this wild ocean chivalry, they had still that passion for martial

renown which grows up with the exercise of arms, however rude and lawless, and which in them was stimulated by the songs of the Skalds.

We are told that they were "sometimes seized with a sort of frenzy, a *furor Martis*, produced by their excited imaginations dwelling upon the images of war and glory, and perhaps increased by those potations of stimulating liquors in which the people of the North, like other uncivilized tribes, indulged to great excess. When this madness was upon them they committed the wildest extravagances, attacked indiscriminately friends and foes, and even waged war against the rocks and trees. At other times they defied each other to mortal combat in some lonely and desert isle."

Among the most renowned of these early sea-kings was Ragnar Lodbrok, famous for his invasion of Northumbria, in England, and no less famous in ancient Sagas for his strange and cruel death. According to those poetic legends, he was a King of Denmark, who ruled his realms in peace, without being troubled with any dreams of conquest. His sons, however, were roving the seas with their warlike followers, and after a time tidings of their heroic exploits reached his court. The jealousy of Ragnar was excited, and he determined on an expedition that should rival their achievements. He accordingly ordered "the Arrow," the signal of war, to be sent through his dominions, summoning his "champions" to arms. He had ordered two ships of immense size to be built, and in them he embarked with his followers. His faithful and discreet Queen, Aslauga, warned him of the perils to which he was exposing himself, but in vain. He set sail for the north of England, which had formerly been invaded by his predecessors. The expedition

was driven back to port by a tempest. The Queen repeated her warnings and entreaties, but, finding them unavailing, she gave him a magical garment that had the virtue to render the wearer invulnerable.

Ragnar again put to sea, and was at last shipwrecked on the English coast. In this emergency his courage did not desert him, but he pushed forward with his small band to ravage and plunder. Ella collected his forces to repel the invader. Ragnar, clothed with the enchanted garment he had received from his beloved Aslauga, and armed with the spear with which he had slain the guardian serpent of Thora, four times pierced the Saxon ranks, dealing death on every side, while his own body was invulnerable to the blows of his enemies. His friends and champions fell one by one around him, and he was at last taken prisoner alive. Being asked who he was, he preserved an indignant silence. Then King Ella said, "If this man will not speak, he shall endure so much the heavier punishment for his obduracy and contempt." So he ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon full of serpents, where he should remain till he told his name. Ragnar, being thrown into the dungeon, sat there a long time before the serpents attacked him; which, being noticed by the spectators, they said he must be a brave man indeed whom neither arms nor vipers could hurt. Ella, hearing this, ordered his enchanted vest to be stripped off, and soon afterward the serpents clung to him on all sides. Then Ragnar said, "How the young cubs would roar if they knew what the old boar suffers!" and expired with a laugh of defiance (pp. 152, 153).

The death-song of Ragnar Lodbrok will be found in an appendix to Henderson's "Iceland," both in the original and in a translation. The version, however, which is in prose, conveys but faintly the poetic spirit of the original. It consists of twenty-nine stanzas, most of them of nine lines, and contains, like the death-song of a warrior among

the American Indians, a boastful narrative of his expeditions and exploits. Each stanza bears the same burden :

“ Hiuggom ver med hiarvi ”—

“ We hewed them with our swords.”

Lodbrok exults that his achievements entitle him to admission among the gods; predicts that his children shall avenge his death; and glories that no sigh shall disgrace his exit. In the last stanza he hails the arrival of celestial virgins sent to invite him to the hall of Odin, where he shall join the assembly of heroes, sit upon a lofty throne, and quaff the mellow beverage of barley. The last strophe of this death-song is thus rendered by Mr. Wheaton :

“ Cease my strain ! I hear them call
Who bid me hence to Odin’s hall !
High seated in their blest abodes,
I soon shall quaff the drink of gods.
The hours of life have glided by—
I fall ! but laughing will I die !
The hours of life have glided by—
I fall ! but laughing will I die ! ”

The sons of Ragnar, if the Sagas may be believed, were not slow in revenging the death of their parent. They were absent from home on warlike expeditions at the time, and did not hear of the catastrophe until after their return to Denmark. Their first tidings of it were from the messengers of Ella, sent to propitiate their hostility. When the messengers entered the royal hall they found the sons of Ragnar variously employed. Sigurdr Snakeseye was playing at chess with his brother Huitserk the Brave, while Björn Ironside was polishing the handle of his spear in the

middle pavement of the hall. The messengers approached to where Ivar the other brother was sitting, and, saluting him with due reverence, told him they were sent by King Ella to announce the death of his royal father.

As they began to unfold their tale Sigurdr and Huitserk dropped their game, carefully weighing what was said. Björn stood in the midst of the hall, leaning on his spear; but Ivar diligently inquired by what means and by what kind of death his father had perished, which the messengers related, from his first arrival in England till his death. When, in the course of their narrative, they came to the words of the dying King, "How the young whelps would roar if they knew their father's fate!" Björn grasped the handle of his spear so fast that the prints of his fingers remained; and, when the tale was done, dashed the spear in pieces. Huitserk pressed the chess-board so hard with his hands that they bled.

Ivar changed color continually, now red, now black, now pale, while he struggled to suppress his kindling wrath.

Huitserk the Brave, who first broke silence, proposed to begin their revenge by the death of the messengers, which Ivar forbade, commanding them to go in peace wherever they would, and if they wanted anything they should be supplied.

Their mission being fulfilled, the delegates, passing through the hall, went down to their ships, and the wind being favorable, returned safely to their King. Ella, hearing from them how his message had been received by the princes, said that he foresaw that of all the brothers Ivar or none was to be feared (pp. 188, 189).

The princes summoned their followers, launched their fleets, and attacked King Ella in the spring of 867:

The battle took place at York, and the Anglo-Saxons were entirely routed. The sons of Ragnar inflicted a cruel and savage retaliation on Ella for his barbarous treatment of their father.

After this battle Northumbria appears no more as a Saxon kingdom, and Ivar was made King over that part of England which his ancestors had possessed, or into which they had made repeated incursions (pp. 189, 190).

Encouraged by the success that attended their enterprises in the northern seas, the Northmen now urged their adventurous prowls into more distant regions, besetting the southern coasts of France with their fleets of light and diminutive barks. Charlemagne is said to have witnessed the inroad of one of their fleets from the windows of his palace in the harbor of Narbonne, upon which he lamented the fate of his successors, who would have to contend with such audacious invaders. They entered the Loire, sacked the city of Nantes, and carried their victorious arms up to Tours. They ascended the Garonne, pillaged Bordeaux, and extended their incursion even to Toulouse. They also entered the Seine in 845, ravaging its banks, and, pushing their enterprise to the very gates of Paris, compelled the monarch Charles to take refuge in the monastery of St. Denis, where he was fain to receive the piratical chieftain Regnier, and to pay him a tribute of seven thousand pounds of silver on condition of his evacuating his capital and kingdom. Regnier, besides immense booty, carried back to Denmark as trophies of his triumph a beam from the abbey of St. Germain and a nail from the gate of Paris; but his followers spread over their native country a contagious disease which they had contracted in France.

Spain was in like manner subject to their invasions. They ascended the Guadalquivir, attacked the great city of Seville, and demolished its fortifications after severe battles with the Moors, who were then sovereigns of that country,

and who regarded these unknown invaders from the sea as magicians, on account of their wonderful daring and still more wonderful success. As the author well observes, "the contrast between these two races of fanatic barbarians, the one issuing forth from the frozen regions of the North, the other from the burning sands of Asia and Africa, forms one of the most striking pictures presented by history."

The straits of Gibraltar being passed by these rovers of the North, the Mediterranean became another region for their exploits. Hastings, one of their boldest chieftains, and father of that Hastings who afterward battled with King Alfred for the sovereignty of England, accompanied by Björn Ironside and Sydroc, two sons of Ragnar Lodbrok, undertook an expedition against Rome, the capital of the world, tempted by accounts of its opulence and splendor, but not precisely acquainted with its site. They penetrated the Mediterranean with a fleet of one hundred barks, and entered the port of Luna in Tuscany, an ancient city, whose high walls and towers and stately edifices made them mistake it for imperial Rome :

The inhabitants were celebrating the festival of Christmas in the cathedral, when the news was spread among them of the arrival of a fleet of unknown strangers. The church was instantly deserted, and the citizens ran to shut the gates, and prepared to defend their town. Hastings sent a herald to inform the Count and Bishop of Luna that he and his band were Northmen, conquerors of the Franks, who designed no harm to the inhabitants of Italy, but merely sought to repair their shattered barks. In order to inspire more confidence, Hastings pretended to be weary of the wandering life he had so long led, and desired to find repose in the bosom of the Christian Church. The Bishop and the Count furnished the fleet

with the needful succor; Hastings was baptized; but still his Norman followers were not admitted within the city walls. Their chief was then obliged to resort to another stratagem: he feigned to be dangerously ill; his camp resounded with the lamentations of his followers; he declared his intention of leaving the rich booty he had acquired to the Church, provided they would grant him sepulture in holy ground. The wild howl of the Normans soon announced the death of their chieftain. The inhabitants followed the funeral procession to the church, but, at the moment they were about to deposit his apparently lifeless body, Hastings started up from his coffin, and, seizing his sword, struck down the officiating Bishop. His followers instantly obeyed this signal of treachery; they drew from under their garments their concealed weapons, massacred the clergy and others who assisted at the ceremony, and spread havoc and consternation throughout the town. Having thus become master of Luna, the Norman chieftain discovered his error, and found that he was still far from Rome, which was not likely to fall so easy a prey. After having transported on board his barks the wealth of the city, as well as the most beautiful women, and the young men capable of bearing arms or of rowing, he put to sea, intending to return to the North.

The Italian traditions as to the destruction of this city resemble more nearly the romance of Romeo and Juliet than the history of the Scandinavian adventurer. According to these accounts, the Prince of Luna was inflamed with the beauty of a certain young Empress, then traveling in company with the Emperor her husband. Their passion was mutual, and the two lovers had recourse to the following stratagem, in order to accomplish their union: The Empress feigned to be grievously sick; she was believed to be dead; her funeral obsequies were duly celebrated, but she escaped from the sepulchre, and secretly rejoined her lover. The Emperor had no sooner heard of their crime than he marched to attack the residence of the ravisher, and avenged himself by the entire destruction of the once flourishing city of Luna. The only point of resemblance between these two stories consists in the romantic incident of the

destruction of the city by means of a feigned death, a legend which spread abroad over Italy and France.

The last and greatest of the sea-kings, or pirates of the North, was Rollo, surnamed *Ferus Fortis*, the Lusty Boar or Hardy Beast, from whom William the Conqueror comes in lineal though not legitimate descent. Our limits do not permit us to detail the early history of this warrior, as selected by our author from among the fables of the Norman chronicles, and the more simple and, he thinks, more veritable narratives in the Icelandic Sagas. We shall merely state that Rollo arrived with a band of Northmen, all fugitive adventurers, like himself, upon the coast of France; ascended the Seine to Rouen, subjugated the fertile province then called Neustria, named it Normandy from the Northmen, his followers, and crowned himself first duke.

Under his firm and vigorous rule, the blessings of order and peace were restored to a country which had so long and so cruelly suffered from the incursions of the northern adventurers. He tolerated the Christians in their worship, and they flocked in crowds to live under the dominion of a pagan and barbarian, in preference to their own native and Christian prince (Charles the Simple) who was unwilling or incapable to protect them.

Rollo established in his duchy of Normandy a feudal aristocracy, or rather it grew out of the circumstances of the country. His followers elected him duke, and he made them counts and barons and knights. The clergy also pressed themselves into his great council or Parliament. The laws were reduced to a system by men of acute intellect, and this system of feudal law was subsequently trans-

planted by William the Conqueror into England, as a means of consolidating his power and establishing his monarchy.

Rollo is said also to have established the Court of Exchequer as the supreme tribunal of justice ; and the perfect security afforded by the admirable system of police established in England by King Alfred is likewise attributed to the legislation of the first Duke of Normandy (p. 252).

Trial by battle, or judicial combat, was a favorite appeal to God by the warlike nations of Scandinavia, as by most of the barbarous tribes who established themselves on the ruin of the Roman Empire. It had fallen into disuse in France, but was revived by Rollo in Normandy, although the clergy were solicitous to substitute the ordeal of fire and water, which brought controversies within their control. The fierce Norman warriors disdained this clerical mode of decision, and strenuously insisted on the appeal to the sword. They afterward, at the Conquest, introduced the trial by combat into England, where it became a part of the common law.*

* A statue or effigy of Rollo, over a sarcophagus, is still to be seen in the cathedral at Rouen, with a Latin inscription stating that he was converted to Christianity in 913, and died in 917, and that his bones were removed to this spot from their place of original sepulture in A. D. 1063. The ancient epitaph, in rhyming monkish Latin, has been lost, except the following lines :

“ Dux Normanorum
Cunctorum,
Norma Bonorum,
Rollo, Ferus fortis,
Quem gens Normannica mortis
Invocat articulo,
Clauditur hoc tumulo.”

Imitation.

“ Rollo, that hardy Boar
Renowned of yore,

A spirit of chivalry and love of daring adventure, a romantic gallantry toward the sex, and a zealous devotion were blended in the character of the Norman knights. These high and generous feelings they brought with them into England, and bore with them in their crusades into the Holy Land. Poetry also continued to be cherished and cultivated among them, and the Norman troubadour succeeded to the Scandinavian skald. The Dukes of Normandy and Anglo-Norman Kings were practicers as well as patrons of this delightful art; and Henry I., surnamed Beauclerc, and Richard Cœur de Lion, were distinguished among the poetical composers of their day.

The Norman minstrels (to quote the words of our author) appropriated the fictions they found already accredited among the people for whom they versified—the British King Arthur, his fabled knights of the Round Table, and the enchanter Merlin with his wonderful prophecies; the Frankish monarch Charlemagne and his paladins; and the rich inventions of Oriental fancy borrowed from the Arabs and the Moors (p. 262).

We have thus cursorily accompanied our author in his details of the origin and character, the laws and superstitions, and primitive religion, and also of the roving expeditions and conquests of the Northmen; and we give him credit for the judgment, and candor, and careful research with which he has gleaned and collated his interesting facts from

Of all the Normans Duke;
Whose name with dying breath
In article of death,
All Norman knights invoke;
That mirror of the bold,
This tomb doth hold."

the rubbish of fables and fictions with which they were bewildered and obscured.

Another leading feature in his work is the conversion of the Northmen, and the countries from which they came, to the Christian faith. An attempt to condense or analyze this part of his work would lead us too far, and do injustice to the minuteness and accuracy of his details. We must, for like reasons, refer the reader to the work itself for the residue of its contents. We shall merely remark that he goes over the same ground with the English historians, Hume, Turner, Lingard, and Palgrave, gleaning from the original authorities whatever may have been omitted by them. He has also occasionally corrected some errors into which they have fallen, through want of more complete access or more critical attention to the Icelandic Sagas and the Danish and Swedish historians, who narrated the successful invasion of England by the Danes under Canute, and its final conquest by William of Normandy.

We shall take leave of our author with some extracts from the triumphant invasion of William, premising a few words concerning his origin and early history. Robert, Duke of Normandy, called Robert the Magnificent by his flatterers, but more commonly known as Robert the Devil, from his wild and savage nature, had an amour with Arlette, the daughter of a tanner, or currier, of Falaise, in Normandy. The damsel gave birth to a male child, who was called William. While the boy was yet in childhood, Robert the Devil resolved to expiate his sins by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and compelled his counts and barons to swear fealty to his son. "*Par ma foi,*" said Robert, "*je ne vous laisserai point sans seigneur. J'ai un petit bâtard qui gran-*

dira s'il plaît à Dieu. Choisissez-le dès ce présent, et je le saiserai devant vous de ce duché comme mon successeur." The Norman lords placed their hands between the hands of the child, and swore fidelity to him according to feudal usage. Robert the Devil set out on his pious pilgrimage, and died at Nice. The right of the boy William was contested by Guy, Count of Burgundy, and other claimants, but he made it good with his sword, and then confirmed it by espousing Matilda, daughter of the Count of Flanders.

On the death of Edward the Confessor, King of England, Harold, from his fleetness surnamed Harefoot, one of the bravest nobles of the realm, assumed the crown, to the exclusion of Edgar Atheling, the lawful heir. It was said that Edward had named Harold to succeed him. William, Duke of Normandy, laid claim to the English throne. We have not room in this review to investigate his title, which was little more than bare pretension. He alleged that Edward the Confessor had promised to bequeath to him the crown, but his chief reliance was upon his sword. Harold, while yet a subject, had fallen by accident within the power of William, who had obtained from him by cajolery and extortion an oath, sworn on certain sacred relics, not to impede him in his plans to gain the English crown.

William prepared an expedition in Normandy, and published a war ban, inviting adventurers of all countries to join him in the invasion of England, and partake the pillage. He procured a consecrated banner from the Pope under the promise of a portion of the spoil, and embarked a force of nearly sixty thousand men on board four hundred vessels and above a thousand boats.

The ship which bore William preceded the rest of the fleet.

with the consecrated banner of the Pope displayed at the mast-head, its many-colored sails embellished with the lions of Normandy, and its prow adorned with the figure of an infant archer bending his bow and ready to let fly his arrow.

William landed his force at Pevensey, near Hastings, on the coast of Sussex, on September 28, 1066; and we shall state from the Norman chronicles some few particulars of this interesting event, not included in the volume under review. The archers disembarked first—they had short vestments and cropped hair; then the horsemen, armed with coats of mail, caps of iron, straight two-edged swords, and long, powerful lances; then the pioneers and artificers, who disembarked, piece by piece, the materials for three wooden towers, all ready to be put together. The Duke was the last to land, for, says the chronicle, “there was no opposing enemy.” King Harold was in Northumbria, repelling an army of Norwegian invaders.

As William leaped on shore, he stumbled and fell upon his face. Exclamations of foreboding were heard among his followers; but he grasped the earth with his hands, and, raising them filled with it toward the heavens, “Thus,” cried he, “do I seize upon this land, and, by the splendor of God, as far as it extends it shall be mine.” His ready wit thus converted a sinister accident into a favorable omen. Having pitched his camp and reared his wooden towers near to the town of Hastings, he sent forth his troops to forage and lay waste the country; nor were even the churches and cemeteries held sacred to which the English had fled for refuge.

Harold was at York, reposing after a victory over the Norwegians, in which he had been wounded, when he heard

of this new invasion. Undervaluing the foe, he set forth instantly with such force as he could muster, though a few days' delay would have brought great reënforcements. On his way he met a Norman monk, sent to him by William, with three alternatives: 1. To abdicate in his favor; 2. To refer their claims to the decision of the Pope; 3. To determine them by single combat. Harold refused all three, and quickened his march; but finding, as he drew nearer, that the Norman army was thrice the number of his own, he intrenched his host seven miles from their camp, upon a range of hills, behind a rampart of palisades and osier hurdles.

The impending night of the battle was passed by the Normans in warlike preparations, or in confessing their sins and receiving the sacrament, and the camp resounded with the prayers and chantings of priests and friars. As to the Saxon warriors, they sat round their camp-fires, carousing horns of beer and wine, and singing old national war-songs.

At an early hour in the morning of the 14th of October, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and bastard brother of the Duke, being the son of his mother Arlette by a burgher of Falaise, celebrated mass, and gave his benediction to the Norman army. He then put a hauberk under his cassock, mounted a powerful white charger, and led forth a brigade of cavalry; for he was as ready with the spear as with the crosier, and for his fighting and other turbulent propensities well merited his surname of Odo the Unruly.

The army was formed into three columns: one composed of mercenaries from the countries of Boulogne and Ponthieu; the second of auxiliaries from Brittany and elsewhere; the third of Norman troops, led by William in person. Each column was preceded by archers in light, quilted

coats instead of armor, some with long-bows, and others with cross-bows of steel. Their mode of fighting was to discharge a flight of arrows, and then retreat behind the heavy-armed troops. The Duke was mounted on a Spanish steed, around his neck were suspended some of the relics on which Harold had made oath, and the consecrated standard was borne at his side.

William harangued his soldiers, reminding them of the exploits of their ancestors, the massacre of the Northmen in England, and, in particular, the murder of their brethren the Danes. But he added another and a stronger excitement to their valor: "Fight manfully, and put all to the sword; and, if we conquer, we shall all be rich. What I gain, you gain; what I conquer, you conquer; if I gain the land, it is yours." We shall give, in our author's own words, the further particulars of this decisive battle which placed a Norman sovereign on the English throne:

The spot which Harold had selected for this ever-memorable contest was a high ground, then called Senlac, nine miles from Hastings, opening to the south, and covered in the rear by an extensive wood. He posted his troops on the declivity of the hill in one compact mass, covered with their shields, and wielding their enormous battle-axes. In the center the royal standard, or gonfalon, was fixed in the ground, with the figure of an armed warrior, worked in thread of gold, and ornamented with precious stones. Here stood Harold, and his brothers Gurth and Leofwin, and around them the rest of the Saxon army, every man on foot.

As the Normans approached the Saxon intrenchments, the monks and priests who accompanied their army retired to a neighboring hill to pray and observe the issue of the battle. A Norman warrior named Taillefer, spurred his horse in front of the line, and, tossing up in the air his sword, which he caught again in his hand,

sang the national song of Charlemagne and Roland; the Normans joined in the chorus, and shouted, "Dieu aide! Dieu aide!" They were answered by the Saxons, with the adverse cry of "Christ's rood! the holy rood!"

The Norman archers let fly a shower of arrows into the Saxon ranks. Their infantry and cavalry advanced to the gates of the redoubts, which they vainly endeavored to force. The Saxons thundered upon their armor, and broke their lances with the heavy battle-axe, and the Normans retreated to the division commanded by William. The Duke then caused his archers again to advance, and to direct their arrows obliquely in the air, so that they might fall beyond and over the enemy's rampart. The Saxons were severely galled by the Norman missiles, and Harold himself was wounded in the eye. The attack of the infantry and men-at-arms again commenced with the cries of "Nôtre-Dame! Dieu aide! Dieu aide!" But the Normans were repulsed and pursued by the Saxons to a deep ravine, where their horses plunged and threw the riders. The *mêlée* was here dreadful, and a sudden panic seized the invaders, who fled from the field, exclaiming that their duke was slain. William rushed before the fugitives, with his helmet in hand, menacing and even striking them with his lance, and shouting with a loud voice, "I am still alive, and, with the help of God, I still shall conquer!" The men-at-arms once more returned to attack the redoubts, but they were again repelled by the impregnable phalanx of the Saxons. The Duke now resorted to the stratagem of ordering a thousand horse to advance and then suddenly retreat, in the hope of drawing the enemy from his intrenchments. The Saxons fell into the snare, and rushed out with their battle-axes slung about their necks, to pursue the flying foe. The Normans were joined by another body of their own army, and both turned upon the Saxons, who were assailed on every side with swords and lances, while their hands were employed in wielding their enormous battle-axes. The invaders now rushed through the broken ranks of their opponents into the intrenchments, pulled

down the royal standard, and erected in its place the papal banner. Harold was slain, with his brothers Gurth and Leofwin. The sun declined in the western horizon, and with his retiring beams sunk the glory of the Saxon name.

The rest of the companions of Harold fled from the fatal field, where the Normans passed the night, exulting over their hard-earned victory. The next morning William ranged his troops under arms, and every man who passed the sea was called by name, according to the muster-roll drawn up before their embarkation at St. Valery. Many were deaf to that call. The invading army consisted originally of nearly sixty thousand men, and of these one-fourth lay dead on the field. To the fortunate survivors was allotted the spoil of the vanquished Saxons, as the first fruits of their victory; and the bodies of the slain, after being stripped, were hastily buried by their trembling friends. According to one narrative, the body of Harold was begged by his mother as a boon from William, to whom she offered as a ransom its weight in gold. But the stern and pitiless conqueror ordered the corpse of the Saxon King to be buried on the beach, adding with a sneer: "He guarded the coast while he lived; let him continue to guard it now he is dead." Another account represents that two monks of the monastery of Waltham, which had been founded by the son of Godwin, humbly approached the Norman and offered him ten marks of gold for permission to bury their king and benefactor. They were unable to distinguish his body among the heaps of slain, and sent for Harold's mistress Editha, surnamed "The Fair" and "The Swan's Neck," to assist them in the search. The features of the Saxon monarch were recognized by her whom he had loved, and his body was interred at Waltham, with regal honors, in the presence of several Norman earls and knights.

We have reached the conclusion of Mr. Wheaton's interesting volume, yet we are tempted to add a few words more from other sources. We would observe that there are not

wanting historians who dispute the whole story of Harold having fallen on the field of battle. "Years afterward," we are told by one of the most curiously learned of English scholars, "when the Norman yoke pressed heavily upon the English, and the battle of Hastings had become a tale of sorrow, which old men narrated by the light of the embers until warned to silence by the sullen tolling of the curfew," there was an ancient anchorite, maimed, and scarred, and blind of an eye, who led a life of penitence and seclusion in a cell near the Abbey of St. John at Chester. This holy man was once visited by Henry I., who held a long and secret discourse with him, and on his death-bed he declared to the attendant monks that he was Harold.* According to this account, he had been secretly conveyed from the field of battle to a castle, and thence to this sanctuary; and the finding and burying of his corpse by the tender Editha is supposed to have been a pious fraud. The monks of Waltham, however, stood up stoutly for the authenticity of their royal relics. They showed a tomb inclosing a moldering skeleton, the bones of which still bore the marks of wounds received in battle, while the sepulchre bore the effigies of the monarch, and this brief but pathetic epitaph, "*Hic jacet Harold infelix.*"

For a long time after the eventful battle of the Conquest it is said that traces of blood might be seen upon the field, and, in particular, upon the hills to the southwest of Hastings, whenever a light rain moistened the soil. It is probable they were discolorations of the soil, where heaps of the slain had been buried. We have ourselves seen broad

* Palgrave, "*History of England*," cap. xv.

and dark patches on the hillside of Waterloo, where thousands of the dead lay moldering in one common grave, and where, for several years after the battle, the rank green corn refused to ripen, though all the other part of the hill was covered with a golden harvest.

William the Conqueror, in fulfillment of a vow, caused a monastic pile to be erected on the field, which, in commemoration of the event, was called the "Abbey of Battle." The architects complained that there were no springs of water on the site. "Work on ! work on !" replied he jovially ; " if God but grant me life, there shall flow more good wine among the holy friars of this convent than there does clear water in the best monastery of Christendom."

The abbey was richly endowed, and invested with archiepiscopal jurisdiction. In its archives was deposited a roll bearing the names of the followers of William, among whom he had shared the conquered land. The grand altar was placed on the very spot where the banner of the hapless Harold had been unfurled, and here prayers were perpetually to be offered up for the repose of all who had fallen in the contest. " All this pomp and solemnity," adds Mr. Palgrave, " has passed away like a dream ! The perpetual prayer has ceased for ever ; the roll of battle is rent ; the escutcheons of the Norman lineages are trodden in the dust. A dark and reedy pool marks where the abbey once reared its stately towers, and nothing but the foundations of the choir remain for the gaze of the idle visitor, and the instruction of the moping antiquary." *

* Palgrave, " History of England," cap. xv.

*THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.**

A CENTURY has rolled away since Lord Chesterfield reached his highest point of worldly elevation, and now comes a republication of his letters, in a collective form, to press upon us the question, how his reputation stands the wear of time. It is not often that a nobleman born leaves much trace of his existence, out of the pages of a peerage-book. Still more rarely is it that he exerts a decided influence over the generations that come after him. Chesterfield is, then, an exception to the general rule. Although one of the genuine aristocracy, owing his title to no modern creation, he made himself a reputation which few of his countrymen equaled in his own day; and, which is perhaps more remarkable, he left his mark upon the mind and manners of the English race so deep, that it will be long before it is entirely effaced. No man ever put into more attractive shape the maxims of a worldly, epicurean philosophy. No man ever furnished, in his own person, a more dazzling specimen of the theory which he recommended. If Cicero came more nearly than any person ever did to the image of

* The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield; including numerous Letters now first published from the Original Manuscripts. Edited, with Notes, by Lord Mahon. London: Richard Bentley. 1845. 4 vols. 8vo.

the perfect orator which he described, Chesterfield is universally considered as having equally sustained his own idea of the perfect gentleman. Notwithstanding his character has been often discussed, and not long ago in this journal, we will not omit the present opportunity of noticing it once more. Lord Mahon has done for us what has never been done before, in placing the whole man most distinctly in our view. The applause of an admiring circle, and the censure of malignant enemies, of his own day, will now pass for exactly what they are worth. It has been the lot of few distinguished persons to be stripped so bare to the public gaze after death. And, strangely enough, this has happened to him, of all others, who spent his life in labors to appear other than he was. The man who systematically wore a mask better than his natural face while on earth, has been doomed by the avarice of an ungrateful woman to hold up a glass magnifying every deformity of his mind to the observation of the most distant posterity. Such is the first moral which we draw from the history of the Earl of Chesterfield.

Let us, then, proceed to look at this figure more in detail. Here is a man who, without being ambitious in the highest sense of that term, was nevertheless an eager aspirant for distinction in more than one field of exertion. He aimed to be a statesman, an orator, a scholar, and a gentleman—in brief, a sort of model man, yet “hackneyed in the ways of the world.” And it must be conceded, too, that if his success was not entirely equal to his own expectations, it was nevertheless very far beyond the average of that of men in general. The reasons why it was not greater we intend to try to explain in the present article. If we can make it appear that they come directly from the theory of

conduct which he maintained, we hope to be not without success in checking the tendency of some minds to be misled by his example. If we can show by the example of Lord Chesterfield himself that the foundation upon which he built his own edifice, which he also earnestly recommends to be adopted by his son, is, in itself, so insecure as not to be worthy of reliance ; and, still more, if we can prove that it creates the difficulties which beyond a certain point render further progress next to impracticable, it may be that we shall turn the direction of some aspirants for distinction to other and better sources of knowledge of the paths of life.

To illustrate our idea, it will be necessary to assume that the lessons which he taught in his letters to his son were those upon which he practiced himself. That this is not in itself an unreasonable inference can be shown by many passages in which the writer refers directly to his own case as a practical illustration of the value of his maxims. The spirit of his teaching is all conveyed in this tone : " See what I did. Go thou and do likewise ; better, if possible—but still after my model." In this there was no undue vanity or self-conceit. Lord Chesterfield knew that he possessed qualities which entitled him to claim a good share of worldly applause, and he also knew the labor it had cost him to make all those qualities as effective as possible. He had a right, from what he found he could do, to infer that others could succeed even better than he, if they would only take the pains which he had done. No other course than his seems to have occurred to his mind as likely to insure success. It is, then, proper to review his life by the light which he himself has furnished, and to trace the causes of his suc-

cess or failure, so far as he may be judged to have succeeded or failed, to the rules which he lays down.

The first point to which we direct our attention is, to ascertain the leading motive to exertion that is held out by his lordship. We find but one, and that is worldly success; in other words, the exaltation of the individual himself to rank, and power, and consideration among his fellow men. This is the great end, to compass which merits that every faculty should be taxed to its utmost. In order to reach this, knowledge is to be acquired, the common every-day morality of men is to be mastered, the manners are to be molded, and even religion is to be respected. To reach this, we are to make ourselves all things to all men, that we may gain them all, not to their good, but to ours. Yet in this laborious process it does not seem absolutely required, however desirable it might be, that we should really be exactly what we appear. It is sufficient if we can succeed in making everybody else believe that we are what we profess. Lord Chesterfield expressly tells his son that his great object, when setting out in life, was "to make every man he met like him, and every woman love him." He says, moreover, that "he often succeeded; but why? By taking great pains." Yet he did not mean to be understood that these pains were taken in an endeavor really to merit such affection, but rather only to appear to merit it, which would answer the purpose quite as well, and be more easily compassed. To cultivate very high qualities of character must be the labor of a life, among even the best natural temperaments. To acquire the power of assuming the appearance of them for the moment may be gained in much less time "by taking proper pains." Although Lord Chesterfield doubtless would

have valued the genuine coin far the most, he was yet too "hackneyed in the ways of life" to require more than that the counterfeit should escape detection. According to his theory, considered apart from his own practice, it is not essential, provided only that a man appear learned and wise, whether he really be so or not; nor does it matter that he should be amiable, or just, or even honest, if he can succeed in concealing the evidence of his ill-temper, or his injustice, or his fraud, from the condemnation of the public. His morality thus proves to be but skin-deep, in fact, though he occasionally claims to show much more. We see it in the summary manner in which he dispatches his orders about all the more serious parts of education. It always sounds as if he spoke thus: "As to religion and morals, a respect for the church catechism and the ten commandments, you, my son, must take it for granted that I advise all that, even though I never mention them, since my whole strength I reserve to enjoin upon you, over and over again, line upon line, and precept upon precept, the necessity of always keeping in mind 'the graces.'"

We understand, then, by the cultivation of "the graces," the adoption of a code of morals which makes the approbation of others the standard of all merit, and the advancement of one's self the end of all exertion. A man is to learn to treat his neighbor well, not because it is due to him that he should, but rather because he may himself lose something by it if he do not. His civility is the result of a calculation of profit and loss in his own mind, by which he has arrived at the conclusion, that the balance will show a net gain to himself in not being rude. Neither is it essential that this civility to others should be carried one step further than is

needful to secure the proposed object. It has its ascending scale, which is regulated by the estimation in which persons are respectively held, and consequently by the power they can wield, either to advance or retard him. To the pauper, for example, it may be allowed to behave as roughly as possible, provided nobody is looking on, because he can not resent it, and, even if he does, his resentment will avail nothing : while to the prince no reasonable amount of exertion is to be spared to manifest a degree of devotion that may earn a substantial recompense from his good-will. All intermediate positions have their share of regard regulated, as the custom-house would say, by a tariff *ad valorem*. Neither is indulgence in all the vices forbidden by the decalogue denied by this system, provided they be not practiced in a manner offensive to those who are able to compel the payment of penalty for so doing. The fault of every action will be estimated, not by the nature of the act itself, so much as by the want of skill manifested in concealing it from the public. To be maladroit, as it is fatal to one's reputation becomes here, as it was in Sparta, the highest crime.

Now, in making such an exposition of the Chesterfield code, we do not pretend to the merit of saying anything new ; much less do we mean to find fault with it at this time. From the day when it was first published, down to the preface of Lord Mahon to this edition, the objection has been perpetually repeated that it converts hypocrisy into the first of virtues. How that may be is aside from the present purpose. The difficulties attending the system, as one of morals, all lie upon the surface. We propose to go a little around them, and maintain that even for the great end proposed to be gained by the adoption of it, worldly success, it is alto-

gether unsafe, and not to be relied on. Even in the hands of a master like Chesterfield himself, the instruments it furnishes are not always sure in their operation. Sometimes they even turn injuriously upon him who uses them most skillfully; and when otherwise used, as they are more than half the time by those who undertake to practice with them, they are apt to be attended with an effect upon their own prospects of advancement as well as of happiness the very opposite of what they had so sanguinely anticipated. If we are in any way successful in showing this to be the case in the history of his lordship himself, as it is now given us from his own lips, our main purpose will be fully answered.

Philip Dormer Stanhope does not seem ever to have been a young man. His letters written from Cambridge betray the acuteness and discretion of an old head. Those addressed to his tutor, before he was of age, show that the artificial bent of his nature was even then already fixed. He devoted himself to his studies, not because he had any passion for knowledge, or any adequate idea of its uses, but because he aspired to shine by the possession of it. The consequence was early pedantry, which he got rid of only by changing the object of his aspirations. He left off quoting the classics, which he never either loved or understood, as soon as he found himself at the shrine of fashion in its citadel of Paris. The faults of the French character then became the objects of his new admiration, and so much did they find that was akin to them in his own nature, that this attachment went with him to his grave. He studied to make himself a Frenchman with as much deliberate earnestness as he had done at college to become a pedant; and his later labors were crowned with even greater success than the

former ones. For the fact that he imitated the French so exactly in his outward manners as to be often taken by themselves for one of them, we must rely upon his affirmation alone. But there is before us another indirect proof of his proficiency, which is more convincing even than this. We see under his own hand how he had learned to overwhelm his tutor, M. Joubreau, with professions of attachment which he did not feel, and to promise him many future letters in that which he meant to be his last.

Let us, however, be exactly just to Lord Chesterfield. He was not insensible to the merits of the English national character, however highly he might value that of the French. His favorite idea, and that which he endeavored to embody in the person of his son, was the union of what he deemed most valuable in each nation. This was a union which he admits he never met with anywhere in life. After such an admission, the idea ought to have occurred to him that there might be, and probably was, an incongruity at bottom, which made the process he desired to effect impracticable. That he did not succeed with his son is well known. Probably the best example ever brought forth was himself. And what was the result? Certainly not such as to make it expedient to repeat the experiment. Lord Chesterfield had wit, and knowledge, and good-breeding, and tact, and eloquence, and spirit; and yet, with the possession of all these qualities, he never secured a hundredth part of the confidence of his king or country that was enjoyed by rivals who possessed few of his accomplishments and nothing of his polish. Sir Robert Walpole was proverbially coarse. The Duke of Newcastle was almost ridiculous. Pitt was cold and haughty and overbearing. Yet they successively controlled the government,

while he wasted his time and pains in futile efforts to obtain it; and even at last, when it appeared within his reach, the event only proved to him most convincingly that it was his fate to clutch at the mere shadow of power while the reality rested in other hands.

National character is the result of so many concurring causes, that it is difficult precisely to define how it grows up. The circumstances which immediately surround a people demand of the flexibility of the human species a certain degree of adaptation to them. To the French people, who are constitutionally ardent, impulsive, and susceptible of rapid emotions, an artificial system of manners is not without its advantages. With them, strong habits of restraint are essential to the peace and safety, not to say the happiness of society. If we knew that a passionate individual had forced himself to cultivate the minor graces of life because he believed that otherwise he might be liable, occasionally, to fall into extremes of treatment of those around him which would breed nothing but quarrels, and perhaps bloodshed, we should be apt to praise his resolution, even though sensible that an evil consequence might follow in his learning to be insincere. Such insincerity may be palliated so long as it is associated with the notion of regulating human passion. But when it becomes allied with coldness, when we know that the person practicing it has no occasion to do so for self-control, and that he resorts to it solely for the purpose of concealing the icy condition of his own heart, making it appear warmer than it really is only to deceive us, the vice becomes in the highest degree revolting. The great body of the English race are, relatively to their Continental neighbors, sluggish in their temperament, and moderate in their

passions. With them, therefore, the endeavor to cultivate the graces leads to a vitiation of moral principle attended by no compensating benefit. If there be one thing for which that race is distinguished above most others, it is for its contempt of the arts of dissimulation, and its steady admiration of examples of truth and sincerity. This virtue goes a good way to compensate for the want of quick susceptibility. And so long as the experience of the world tends to show the impracticability of uniting these qualities of the respective nations, it will be better for each not to run the risk of spoiling what it has, in the vain quest of what it has not.

We have said that, at the age of twenty, the young Lord Stanhope had already acquired the peculiar character which ever after marked him when he was known as Lord Chesterfield. His leading trait was then, as afterward, want of a heart. From this source flowed his merits as well as his faults. Hence sprang the coolness of his judgment and the absence of generosity. Hence arose his aversion to intemperance in drinking—the vice of warm and convivial natures—and his passion for gaming, the tendency of the selfish and the cold. The same cause that polished his exterior effectually completed the perversion of the springs of action that were working within. It made him brilliant but superficial, extravagant and yet not generous, captivating and yet treacherous. It secured him hosts of admirers but very few supporters—crowds of flatterers and no devoted friends.

It has not often happened to a young man to start in life under fairer auspices than his lordship. Descended from some of the best families in the United Kingdom, heir apparent to an earldom, he came forward at the very moment when the crown had devolved upon the Brunswick family

and George I. was manifesting his gratitude to General Stanhope, the kinsman of the young nobleman, for his eminent services in bringing about that result, by placing him at the head of the government. Before the youth was of age the doors of the House of Commons were opened to receive him, and a place in the household of the heir to the throne was secured for his acceptance. The road to power seemed invitingly open to him. That which others toil through long years of pain to acquire, and which they gain, if at all, at so late a period in life as to make it scarce worth the struggle it has cost, appeared almost to throw itself into his hands at once. Little remained for him to do but to confirm the favorable impressions toward himself which his first address might create, and to convince the public, through his position in Parliament, of the extent of his capacity to be at the head of affairs should the time arrive that might require his services. Surely, if the cultivation of the graces, the elegance of high breeding, the fascination of external manner, were ever likely to avail for the benefit of their possessor so much as his lordship would have had his son believe that they do, no opportunity could be more favorable to prove their efficacy than this which had arisen in his own case.

Now let us observe what the result was. Young Lord Stanhope rushed into the House of Commons, eager to exercise his carefully trained powers in the arena of debate, and to mark his devotion to the house of Hanover by supporting the strong measures devised in order to establish it upon the throne. Here, however, he soon discovered that the graces, a finished manner of delivery, and polished diction were not all that was essential to secure the affection of a

popular body. While the gladiator was studying his attitudes, a much inferior combatant was at work effectually to shake his standing before the House. There was a member of the party to which Chesterfield was opposed who was gifted in a high degree with the dangerous power of mimicry. The oratory of his lordship, depending in a great degree upon manner, if we may judge of it by his own estimate of its power, was exactly of that kind which lies most open to imitation and caricature. While, therefore, we are nowhere informed that the faculty of the mimic had any effect whatsoever in weakening the almost despotic power of Walpole, of William Pitt, or Pulteney, we learn on the other hand that it almost sealed the lips of the courtly Stanhope. His graces only availed to expose him to the withering shaft of ridicule, while they furnished him no adequate shield for his defense. Had he remained for the rest of his life in the lower branch, he would in all probability have been set down among dumb legislators, the *pedarii* of whom he so often and so contemptuously speaks. That and every popular body requires a more nervous and masculine mode of address than he was found to possess. It is the place for earnest contention, and not for the make-believe sports of a tournament. Here, then, is the first example which his history furnishes, that mere manner is not so sure of success as he himself appears to imagine. For even when fortified, as in his case, by a greater coincidence of personal qualities than usually falls to the lot of public speakers, it did not enable him to overcome the most trivial obstacle that fortune could well throw in his path.

Neither was the success of the young lord greater from the opportunities of private access which he enjoyed to the

members of the royal family, than from his exertions on a more public field. The first event that happened to mar his prospects, one indeed for which no address can be in any manner prepared, was a quarrel between the King, George I., and the Prince of Wales, in whose immediate service Lord Stanhope had been placed. This quarrel grew out of the circumstance that the Duke of Newcastle had been appointed to stand godfather to the Prince's child—which the Prince thought proper to resent. The King, on his part, became violently offended. From words he proceeded to acts; he banished his son from the palace, forbade any public honors to be paid to his rank, and separated him from his children. Neither was this all. The friends of the son were compelled to make their election between adherence to him and a reception at St. James's. As one of his immediate household, Lord Stanhope was thus driven to take a side. On the one hand was the power in the ascendant, to offend which would necessarily cut off all prospect of present promotion. On the other was the rising sun, to neglect which might lead in no very long time to consequences far more serious and lasting. Disagreeable as the choice might be, his lordship decided on the right side. Whatever may have been his motives for so doing, and his own theory forbids us from believing that they were disinterested, he determined to hold to the heir apparent, in spite of every solicitation to the contrary. It is even said that, in order to detach him from his connection, an offer was made to create his father a duke, and that by rejecting it he not only cut himself off for the time from office, but offended his parent, who would have been gratified by the title. The merit of this self-denial must be estimated, ac-

cording to Chesterfield's philosophy, by the age of the sovereign, which was then only fifty-seven. And, as his constitution gave no signs of decline, it must be admitted that the sacrifice which he made was one of no ordinary character. And, if done generously and without qualification, it should, upon every principle of gratitude, have secured the lasting attachment of the person in whose behalf it was made.

Such was not, however, the result. Lord Stanhope became Earl of Chesterfield not very long before the Prince of Wales succeeded to his father's throne. A new field seemed to open before him, and one in which he was much better fitted to succeed. There was no malicious mocker in the House of Lords to mar the effect of his elegant playfulness. Here was no sharp encounter of masculine minds to be apprehended. Their lordships rather courted that state of repose which delights in gentle, as it is unfriendly to violent, emotions. Lord Chesterfield commanded their attention not merely by his positive qualifications to please, but by his relative superiority over most of them. The oratorical ability of that body has always mainly depended upon those newly created peers who have received their titles as a reward for service rendered as commoners. The very novelty of an eloquent lord whose family had been ennobled for more than two centuries was a recommendation. Chesterfield knew how to avail himself of this advantage. He, who as a member of the lower House had made little impression as a speaker, was listened to as a peer with the most profound attention and delight. Yet, although his altered position in this regard had thus materially contributed to enlarge the sphere of his influence, the accession of George

II. was not attended with the results which perhaps he had a right to expect. The reasons for this must in a degree be left to conjecture. So far from there being any manifestation of gratitude for past sacrifices, on the part of the sovereign, it is very certain that Chesterfield was a marked object of dislike, while the Duke of Newcastle, the very person about whom the original quarrel arose, managed to establish himself as a favorite during the king's life. And here again we find an opportunity to observe the fallacy of the theory that a cultivation of external graces and an elaborate effort to please everybody is the surest road to worldly elevation. His lordship had probably not been wanting in his efforts to conciliate the good will of those whom he considered most likely to produce an effect upon his success; but he doubtless overshot his mark, as worldly people are apt to do. One of his maxims, which he most earnestly presses upon his son, is that every person, whatever may be his situation about a court, may have some means of influence upon one's fortune, and is therefore worth pleasing:

Merit at courts, without favor (he says), will do little or nothing; favor without merit will do a good deal; but favor and merit together will do everything. Favor at courts depends upon so many, such trifling, such unexpected and unforeseen events, that a good courtier must attend to every circumstance, however little, that either does or can happen; he must have no absences, no distractions; he must not say, "I did not mind it! who would have thought it?" He ought both to have minded and to have thought it. A chambermaid has sometimes caused revolutions in courts, which have produced others in kingdoms. Were I to make my way to favor in a court, I would neither willfully nor by negligence give a dog or a cat there reason to dislike me (vol. ii., p. 267).

Notwithstanding all this, the converse of the proposition is sometimes true—that there is quite as much risk of injury from a mistake in paying court to the wrong persons as in not paying it to the right ones. Without having any positive authority for affirming it to be true, we are yet strongly inclined to the opinion that this was the rock upon which Chesterfield found himself wrecked. It was in his character to suppose that the mistress must have some influence over the King's actions. Such is the lesson uniformly taught in the experience of the French monarchy, a history that had not been lost upon the observing nobleman. The idea that the mistress should have none and the Queen all power was an anomaly reserved for the age of George II. It is very certain that Chesterfield did take pains always to maintain a friendly and intimate relation with Lady Suffolk, even before the accession of the King. And his own sketch of that lady long afterward written, while it admits her want of influence, betrays the fact that he was himself privy to some of the instances in which her endeavors to exercise it had proved vain. Is it, then, unreasonable to infer, from our general knowledge of the man and the ordinary springs of his action, that he bought his own experience of its extent? Sir Robert Walpole was a coarse and ill-bred person in comparison, and yet he gained a complete victory over his rival by neglecting the wrong and going at once to the right source of power. When the question was in agitation, at the commencement of the reign, what the provision in the civil list for the Queen should be, and Sir Spencer Compton, the *locum tenens* of first minister, proposed only fifty thousand pounds, it is said that Walpole came forward with an offer to double it. From that moment to the end of Caroline's

life, vehement as was the opposition against him, no person, and least of all Chesterfield, was able to shake this minister in the possession of the royal confidence. Such was the result of the second effort to curry favor by the cultivation of superior graces.

Still another illustration of the insecurity of the Chesterfield theory to obtain the end proposed is to be found in different portions of his history relating to this same period. George I. came over from Hanover without his wife, and with two or three mistresses, a sketch of whom is now printed for the first time among the characters which his lordship has admirably described. Of these mistresses the most noted was the Duchess of Kendall, with whom the monarch is described as passing most of his time, and who had all influence over him, though she was very little above an idiot. Such is Chesterfield's own account of a person with whom he nevertheless preferred above all others to form intimate relations. This lady brought with her to England a young female, whom she chose to call her niece, Melusina de Schulemburg, but whom the ill-natured world, and Chesterfield doubtless among the rest, presumed to regard as her daughter by the King. Not long after her migration, this young lady was created Countess of Walsingham in her own right, and the belief was general that she would prove the heiress of a large property. To her, then, Lord Chesterfield decided to pay his addresses, and solicit her hand in marriage. Was his motive love? Who that reads any of his productions could ever suspect such a thing? Was it pride, to seek to connect his ancient line with a person of suspected legitimacy? But if not love nor pride, what could have been his reason but the hope of securing the ear of the sov-

ereign through the person described by him as almost an idiot—namely, the Duchess of Kendall? If such were his object, it is easy to comprehend the cause of the feeble gratitude manifested by George II. upon his accession. For all the expectations of Melusina de Schulemburg, which may justly be supposed to have also weighed in the balance with Chesterfield, were unquestionably regarded by the heir apparent as likely to deduct just so much money from his own legitimate patrimony. In point of fact, the very first act of the new sovereign was to destroy that will of his father upon which the lady's hopes depended.

Yet so little did these courtly arts avail in favor of his lordship, that even George I. refused to consent to this marriage. The reason assigned was his addiction to the vice of gaming, a vice of which the King probably foresaw the effect upon any provision which he might be likely to make for his daughter. Yet Lord Chesterfield did not on this account relax in his suit. The lady, captivated by his manners and his reputation, persisted in adhering to the object of her choice. But the marriage did not take place until some time after the death of the old King, and when, as a connection, it had become of little value. In the interval, Chesterfield, being too important a person to be entirely neglected, had been removed from the stage of domestic contention by an appointment as envoy to Holland, receiving soon afterward the office of high steward of the King's household. The policy of Walpole was to put him out of sight and out of reach. Chesterfield, flattering himself upon his possession of peculiar qualifications for diplomacy, eagerly embraced the offer thus made, and acquitted himself, it must be admitted, with great credit. But while doing so

he let slip the best opportunity he ever had of gaining the supreme power at home. The four years spent by him in Holland had been sedulously employed, by Walpole to confirm his master's habits of dependence upon himself. So fixed had they become that a desperate push made by Townshend to unseat him, most probably with the connivance of Chesterfield, ended only in the disgrace of the contrivers. Townshend resigned, and no avenue remained open for his friend but to join in opposition, in which, upon his return home, his lordship accordingly embarked.

It can not, then, be denied that up to this time reliance upon courtiers' arts had been productive to his lordship of little beyond successive disappointments. He had not only failed to be first, but he had seen those preferred to him who were weak in the points in which he was strong and upon which he most relied. In despair, he now for the first time changed his course, and determined to trust to his general abilities more than to his address. He came back from Holland only to throw his weight into the scale against a favorite measure, and one severely testing the popularity of the minister. Sir Robert Walpole was not a man to forgive opposition, so he punished the votes of Chesterfield and of his connections upon the excise bill by immediate removal from their posts. From this date until the minister fell, an open and active war was carried on between them. Chesterfield proved an active and efficient party leader, not merely as a speaker in the House of Lords, but as a writer and the contriver of political combinations. Most particularly was there one topic, not often touched in vain with the British public, upon which he lavished his ample stores of wit, as the elder Pitt exhausted upon it the whole artil-

lery of invective. This topic was the royal predilection for Hanover, and its effects upon the foreign policy of the minister. Ridicule is, of all modes of attack, that least readily forgiven, particularly when directed by an inferior. George II., incapable of wit himself, relished it little in others, but least of all in Chesterfield. Probably no man in the kingdom was so cordially hated by him at this time; and, to crown all, the marriage long talked of with Melusina de Schulemburg was just then decided upon, with intimations that not even royalty itself should be a protection against a scrutinizing inquiry after the suppressed will. George is said to have prudently compromised that matter by the payment of twenty thousand pounds, though he could scarcely have felt much softened by receiving this additional evidence of his lordship's good will. It betrayed something of the cat disposition, after long courting the monarch, thus to threaten him with his claws. Yet, after all, we very much doubt whether the hostility did not advance his prospects much faster than the smooth and fair seeming. There was manliness about it, and manliness is of all qualities the most indispensable to the success of a politician. When Sir Robert Walpole was at last hunted down, and arrangements were entered into for the purpose of reconstructing an administration out of the heterogeneous materials which had only coalesced to effect his overthrow, there were but two persons designated by the monarch as utterly inadmissible to his cabinet. Those two were William Pitt and Lord Chesterfield. Yet so far was this exclusion from proving an insurmountable barrier to either, that the former actually forced his way into it soon after, on his own terms, and the latter obtained, by his steady opposition, a degree of public con-

sideration which ultimately secured to him all the posts of influence which he ever acquired.

In the mean time, however, the political career of his lordship, if it kept him out of office, was not without some solid compensation. Sarah, the old Duchess of Marlborough, had not ceased to take an active interest in public affairs, though she no longer wielded the power of her earlier days. Her hatred of Sir Robert Walpole had been intense, and proportionate was her gratitude to those who distinguished themselves in violent opposition to him. To William Pitt she left by her will the sum of ten thousand pounds sterling; while to Lord Chesterfield she gave, in the same instrument, her best and largest diamond ring, twenty thousand pounds in cash, and the reversion of her Wimbledon estate in failure of the Spencer family. With this support he could well spare two years more in opposition to the ill-assorted combination, which, at the expense of the popular favor, had succeeded to Walpole's power. But when at last this fell to pieces, and a new arrangement took place, which ended in what was then called "the broad bottom," Lord Chesterfield owed his admission into it to almost any cause more than to his manners and address. His audience of leave-taking upon going the second time to Holland, granted to him by the King most reluctantly, was only one continued insult. It seemed as if the occasion presented itself only to manifest the royal resentment of the peer's courtly good breeding. Dr. Maty tells us that, in return for the elaborate civility and offers of service which the Earl made, the King vouchsafed no other answer than the cold words, "You have your instructions, my lord."

It rarely happens to politicians to be perfectly consistent.

The man who had distinguished himself above all others by his opposition to that system of foreign alliances which drew the country into Continental wars, was now to reopen his path to court favor by his efforts "to bring the Dutch roundly into the war" against France. He succeeded in obtaining the appointment of the Duke of Cumberland to be chief of the confederate army, which, if it cost his country the defeat of Fontenoy, at any rate earned for himself some title to his sovereign's regard. Yet, even after his return from his mission, and before he went over to assume the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he obtained no personal interview with the King. It was not until the rebellion of 1745 took place, in the midst of which George found himself deserted by his ministers, when they knew he must submit to their dictation of their own terms, as he could not do without them, that his lordship's disapprobation of their course seems to have entirely removed the burden of prejudice that had weighed against him in the royal mind. His services had also been of no slight value in keeping Ireland tranquil throughout the period of commotion in the neighboring kingdom, and they were appreciated. After the lapse of a few months, his lordship found himself at last in the King's closet, at the King's desire, acting in the capacity of one of the Secretaries of State. The avenue to power seemed once more perfectly open to him. He had regained it by services, and not by his address; yet here seemed another chance by which to show how much the cultivation of insinuating manners might avail to fix a growing impression. Once more did his lordship resort to his favorite theory to sustain him. The Queen was no longer living to embarrass him, so that he felt safe in devoting his attention to the Countess of Yar-

mouth. Yet, little as he spared exertion, the expected effect did not follow. His lordship continued in office long enough to be convinced that he was overruled in everything, down to the smallest appointment, by his colleague, the Duke of Newcastle, the man who made no pretension to "the graces"; and he then resigned. The result of this last experiment seems to have been so decisive with him that he never attempted another. At the early age of fifty-four he retired from public life in disgust. He had failed to be first, and he wished to be nothing less. And in his want of success he gave to posterity the most convincing proof that, after all, polished manners can not be relied on as the basis of a political career, even though they be connected with wit, eloquence, and knowledge of the world.

It will be perceived that, even upon the mere utilitarian view of the system of his lordship, we maintain, from a review of his own history, that it is good for nothing. We have thrown all higher arguments out of consideration, with much the same coolness that he does himself. Yet we would not be understood to affirm that refined breeding and manners are of no use in forwarding a man's success; on the contrary, we are willing to believe them to be of the greatest use, provided only there be a heart beneath. This little element is the important omission in his lordship's doctrine. He seems to have thought it unessential what the inside might be, if only the surface was sufficiently polished to conceal it. But, by a compensating process of nature, men are rendered penetrating in proportion to the efforts made to deceive them. The suspicion of art destroys confidence in professions. Accordingly, we find in Lord Chesterfield's case that, though he was much admired, he was little liked.

In his assiduous court to all whom he believed to possess influence, even his sagacity could not save him from betraying himself to the most inexperienced eyes. When one of the pages about the court found himself more than once made the object of unusual attention by the Earl, the boy could not help, at last, intimating to him his suspicion that he had been mistaken for M. Louis, a youth who passed for the King's son by Lady Yarmouth. His suspicion was well founded, and the misdirected civility, thus known to be hollow, had done his lordship harm instead of good. Thus we may see that he who learns to be civil to his neighbor solely for the use he may make of his friendship can never become less than a selfish hypocrite, whom the first accident that unmasks him will render contemptible.

The cultivation of a general spirit of benevolence and charity is a far better foundation for refinement of manners, because it imposes no task of insincerity. It is rather unusual, we know, to go to the Scriptures for any rule of fashionable life, and it may from some expose us to the charge of writing sermon-fashion ; but we must say that we have never understood the reason why it was necessary to go further for the very highest theory of good breeding than the broad principle laid down in the Holy Book, of doing unto others as you would they should do unto you. To be sure, we should be prevented by it from saying flattering falsehoods, merely for the sake of deluding our neighbor's vanity ; yet, on the other hand, we might be allowed the pleasure of using the truth to encourage and sustain his virtuous exertion. How much may be done in this way few people entirely understand ; or how many young hearts yearn for a word of judicious consolation, under the inevitable morti-

fications and chill produced on first entering into the conflicts of the world. To them, flattery is rank poison, while discriminating praise serves as the breath of life. But there is a higher reason why the Christian precept is a more perfect rule of manners. It forbids one from committing wrong or injustice of any kind. Had his lordship followed it he would have been saved from many mortifications, the consequence of such injustice. It would have held him back from the cold-blooded undertaking of seducing a weak woman, merely because it had come to his ears that she expressed a very natural indignation at his licentious habits, and from the equally cruel endeavor to train up the offspring of that connection to a place it was impossible for him to reach, except through the possession of a character and abilities as much above those of his father as that father's were above the level of the generality of men of his time.

Lord Chesterfield has much to answer for on many accounts, but most especially on this, that he formed a school, the members of which, while committing the most immoral acts, have kept each other in countenance by quoting his specious maxims in their defense. We do not mean to say that vicious and plausible men of fashion did not exist before his day. Such persons have always been found in every cultivated society. What we do mean is, that he laid down a code of rules which gained immediate currency in that society, whereby great latitude was, almost by consent, conceded to certain kinds of vice. According to him, it is a perfectly gentlemanly proceeding to corrupt another man's wife, and much more advisable, as it saves the personal risk attending general licentiousness. Yet no consideration is given to the inevitable effects that follow upon the happiness

of families and the peace of society itself. And generally it is, according to him, perfectly allowable to disregard the rights or feelings of the rest of the world, provided appearances be preserved, and a smile be kept upon the face which meditates a wrong.

Let us now consider one of the cases in which, as it appears to us, his lordship fully exemplified the tendencies of his nature. He had married a woman whom he did not love, and he was not so fortunate as to have children by her, which might have awakened some interest in her welfare. On the other hand, it happened that he had a son by one Mrs. Du Bouchet, a Frenchwoman, already alluded to, and this son he determined to make the subject of a grand experiment. His own theory was that differences of character depend more upon education than upon nature; so he resolved to spare no pains in making at all hazards this unfortunate subject fill up his *beau-idéal* of a man. In order to do this, he willfully overlooked the enormous difficulty before him, at the very outset, of making an illegitimate son play a first part in the history of such a country as Great Britain. Nor was this all. He neglected to consider the extent of the trial he was preparing for the poor young man. Who shall say how much of the awkwardness and bashfulness for which his father perpetually reproached him might have been owing to an impression, early received, of inequality with those immediately around him? Who that knows boys, and especially English boys, can fail to understand how soon the smallest difference of condition makes itself felt among them, to the depression of those who are suspected of laboring under a disadvantage? How Mr. Stanhope was made to feel this in later life, both at Brussels

and in the fruitless effort to get the appointment of minister at Venice, we see and know, from the letters before us. It may be very well for his lordship to glide over such mortifications lightly, and call them inevitable evils, to be remedied only by greater exertions; but his duty was not the less plain to reflect, before he forced a young man into such a situation, how apt it is to break down the spirit and disable it from ever entering upon the exertions required. How few men in Great Britain have made head against such an early disadvantage! Is it, then, to be wondered at, that Stanhope, who had not elements of character strong enough to succeed, even without it, should have failed so entirely while under its influence? The fault surely was not so much in him as in his father's heartless error of judgment in educating him. Neither is this all the penalty which the poor young man has been compelled to pay. Not only has the record of his failure to be a great man been made up against him on the book of history, but his memory is destined for ever to be associated with the evidence of the labor and pains expended in vain upon him to produce any extraordinary result whatever. As a matter of common justice, the readers of the present collection should have seen a few of Mr. Stanhope's own letters, at least sufficient to give them an opportunity to judge him fairly. As it is now, his reputation fluctuates between those who call him a stupid booby and those who describe him as a dull pedant, while still a third party do not let him off even so easily as that. Yet, admitting all that may be said against him, who is most in fault for it? Is it to be supposed that the young man was worse, in any respect, than ten thousand people of his own or of any age, who live out their appointed number of

days, respectable citizens, and who go to their graves deeply regretted by the usual circle of afflicted relations? Why is it, then, that he should be singled out for everlasting infamy, as a dunce and a cub, or as

“Base, degenerate, meanly bad,”

because his father chose in his person to immortalize his own crime, and his unfeeling ambition of making an experiment, against the success of which the chances were as a thousand to one?

A common remark is also that, if Lord Chesterfield found his son a dull scholar in the “graces,” he proved rather too apt in the acquisition of hypocrisy. Mr. Stanhope died, leaving his father no legacy but a wife and two children, of whose very existence he had not had the slightest hint. That under these circumstances he did not at once renounce them, thus visiting upon the third generation the sins of the second and the first, has been in some quarters regarded as praiseworthy. But let us examine this act a little more narrowly. These children were at least legitimate. They had no share in the failure of their father to be what he was never made for. That father had been put by no act of his own into a situation to which he was not adequate, and had been deprived of all opportunity to gain any other. How could his lordship have done less than he did? How could he avoid giving to the victims of his delusion at least the means of escaping from its worst consequences? We do not perceive that he attempted anything more than this. The boys were taken care of and put to school, and, for aught we know of them, acted in life about as well as the average of their neighbors; but the dream of

making finished gentlemen statesmen, luckily for them, was entirely over. The Earl reserved his last words of advice more suitably for the heir of his title, a distant connection by a collateral branch, whom he also made, to the exclusion of these grandchildren, heir to his estates.

Lord Chesterfield's system made him neither a good, a happy, nor a successful man. Such being the result in his own person, we see no reason why it should be further held up to the imitation of posterity. Yet there is something in the man, invested as he appears to us with all the authority of wealth, dignity, rank, and title, calculated to impose upon the multitude. There is still more in the elegance of his style, conveying as it does just thoughts in a most clear and forcible way. There was a strange union about him, too, of the loosest general notions, formed from his experience of the corruption of his times, and the most strict adherence in his own case to personal integrity. Early in his career, when he was appointed to succeed Lord Townshend as Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, that nobleman advised him to make the place more profitable than he himself had done, by disposing of the places in his gift. "I rather, for this time," adroitly and properly replied Chesterfield, "wish to follow your lordship's example than your advice." He never sold a commission. The same spirit appears to have followed him throughout in the administration of official power. He had a thorough detestation of the jobbing temper so common in England, and not by any means unknown in the United States, among political men. There is another point in his history which is highly creditable to him. He took no presents from any one, nor did he approve of them when taken by others. There is a passage in his parting

letter to his godson upon this subject, which, both as illustrative of his own character and as full of sound doctrine, we can not resist the temptation to transcribe :

If you should ever fill a great station at court, take care above all things to keep your hands clean and pure from the infamous vice of corruption, a vice so infamous that it degrades even the other vices that may accompany it. Accept no present whatever ; let your character in that respect be transparent and without the least speck ; for, as avarice is the vilest and dirtiest vice in private, corruption is so in public life. I call corruption the taking of a sixpence more than the just and known salary of your employment, under any pretense whatsoever. Use what power and credit you may have at court in the service of merit rather than of kindred, and not to get pensions and reversions for yourself or your family ; for I call that also, what it really is, scandalous pollution, though of late it has been so frequent that it has almost lost its name (vol. iv., p. 431).

Yet strange indeed are the inconsistencies of man. The same mind which in this passage seems to catch a glimpse of something above the cold and mercenary level of ordinary life, in another part of these letters treats of one of the most sacred of human relations in the following thoroughly business-like manner :

Do not be in haste to marry, but look about you first, for the affair is important. There are but two objects in marriage, love or money. If you marry for love, you will certainly have some very happy days, and probably many very uneasy ones. If for money, you will have no happy days, and probably no uneasy ones ; in this latter case, let the woman at least be such a one that you can live decently and amicably with, otherwise it is a robbery ; in either case, let her be of an unblemished and unsuspected character, and of a rank not indecently below your own (vol. ii., p. 427).

Very surely it could not have been the love of moral excellence which prompted the sentiment in the first extract, or even any very refined estimate of human duty. We much fear that we must resolve it into temperament. Avarice was not one of his lordship's vices. He was above the low arts to which it naturally resorts, and the dirty crimes to which it leads. But he was above them, not because he scorned them as wrong, but as mean; not because he admired purity of purpose and singleness of heart, but because he deemed it unbecoming in a gentleman to put himself in the power of people that were beneath him. With him it was scandalous pollution to trade in pensions and reversions for himself at court, but it was right enough to trade with a woman for money in the article of marriage. Yet, if we closely analyze the moral principle involved in the two operations, it will be scarcely practicable to lay down a rule of action which would justify his lordship's discrimination.

Passing from this subject, let us bring the present article to a close by a brief review of the various claims which his lordship has made upon the attention of posterity, whether as an orator, a scholar, a patron of letters, a statesman, a writer, or a gentleman. Few of England's nobility have tried to shine so variously; and, if he did not equally succeed in everything, it is surely creditable in him that he made the attempt.

We have already mentioned the circumstances attending his first appearance upon the floor of the House of Commons; how carefully he had prepared himself, and how all his preparation was defeated by the inopportune ridicule of a member who was a mimic. This incident is deserving of notice, because it lets us into a pretty accurate idea of his

level as a speaker. With a highly artificial manner it is probable that his lordship united the amount of wit and practical good sense which we see in the productions he left behind him. These qualifications made him an agreeable and an elegant speaker, but they did not raise him above the reach of vulgar efforts at imitation. There was wanting in him either great intellectual, or that moral superiority, based upon solid and noble views of man's duties, which commands the respect and fastens the attention even of the most scornful. We have never heard that the elder or the younger Pitt, Burke, or even Fox, in spite of defects of manner, was in any degree embarrassed by the attacks that were made upon him. Some of these, and most particularly Lord Chatham, were remarkable for peculiarities not a little striking and easy to be taken off. Yet they continued to exercise their powers with effect, placing ridicule at defiance. From this we are unavoidably led to infer that Lord Chesterfield's own account of his oratory is not an underestimate, and that he owed the greater part of his success in it to his polish. That success was established after he had reached a congenial spot for the exercise of his faculty in the House of Lords. Yet very few of his speeches have been handed down to us to give us the means of judging of his style. Horace Walpole, no very friendly critic by the way, speaks of one of them as the finest speech he ever listened to, which is saying a good deal for a man who witnessed the Parliamentary struggles of half a century—from the great Walpolean battle downward. It not infrequently happens, however, that this remark is made by a person just fresh from hearing a well-delivered address, the greatest merit of which, after all, comes from the effect it momen-

tarily produces. Very certainly the specimens which Dr. Maty furnishes, in his edition of his lordship's works, will not sustain any similar rate of commendation. They are in no respect above the level of middling performances, and sometimes sink even below it. For example, in the second speech upon the gin act, a species of temperance question, almost the same with that which agitated Massachusetts a few years since, what sort of force is there in the following extract, if considered as a piece of invective?—

This bill, therefore, appears to be designed only to thin the ranks of mankind, and to disburden the world of the multitudes that inhabit it, and is perhaps the strongest proof of political sagacity that our ministers have yet exhibited. They well know, my Lords, that they are universally detested, and that, whenever a Briton is destroyed, they are freed from an enemy; they have therefore opened the flood-gates of gin upon the nation, that, when it is less numerous, it may be more easily governed.

Surely this is not the tone which would overthrow a ministry. It wants force and sincerity. We can see at once that it was only a pleasant literary exercise for the amusement of the auditors. It would do to make even the Duke of Newcastle himself, at whom it was directed, laugh very heartily. But, as to any effect which it was likely to produce in staying the passage of the bill itself, he might as well have hoped to get it by talking in an unknown tongue. Yet his lordship was doubtless in earnest in his speech. Temperance in drinking was one of his leading virtues. He detested drunkenness because it was a coarse and vulgar vice. He constantly laments, in his correspondence, the extent to which his Irish friends were addicted to it. Yet, instead of treating it in the broad and noble way by which its evils can

always be made palpable to the hearer, he sacrifices the truth to frivolous conceits. This we take to be the true reason and the whole reason why his lordship did not in his lifetime obtain the influence and why he has not since merited the reputation that belong to the highest species of oratorical power.

Of his lordship's merit as a scholar and a patron of scholars we have little evidence beyond the scattered opinions upon books to be gathered from the letters before us, and the memorable adventure with Dr. Johnson. To scholarship, in the extended sense of the term, he had no claim—while his taste, even in the limited regions of belles-lettres, was far from being accurate or pure. It is very clear that he did not relish even those of the ancient classics which he had studied. If he had, surely he would not have preferred the “*Henriade*” to the “*Iliad*” or “*Æneid*,” to “*Paradise Lost*,” or even to the “*Jerusalem Delivered*.” The criticisms which he makes upon the works of his favorite Voltaire appear sometimes difficult to account for. At this day, we prefer the wit of “*Micromegas*,” even though not altogether original, to the “*History of the Crusades*,” or “*L'Esprit Humain*”; yet his lordship considers the latter as excellent, and the former as wholly unworthy of the author. Through all these opinions, we think we can see prevailing the same cold, worldly way of viewing things which we find predominating on other subjects. To his mind, the *cui bono* seems to have been perpetually present, whatever the topic in hand might be. He complains of Milton that, “not having the honor to be acquainted with any of the parties in his poem except the man and the woman, the characters and speeches of a dozen or two of angels, and of

as many devils, were as much above his reach as his entertainment. Keep this secret for me," he adds; "for, if it should be known, I should be abused by every tasteless pedant and every solid divine in England." Which means to say, we presume, that to admire Milton is characteristic of bad taste—an opinion which we venture to say his lordship will not have a great many at this day to join him in, while it gives us a pretty fair opportunity of estimating the extent of his own taste.

But, if his lordship was not himself a scholar, he certainly assumed to himself to be the patron of scholarship in others. It was to him, as such, that Dr. Johnson ventured to address his project of an English Dictionary, and not merely because his lordship happened at the moment to be high in office. We allude to this subject the more willingly because we have lately seen some effort made to deny this, and to excuse the coldness and neglect which brought upon his lordship the celebrated reply of the Doctor. It is pleaded in his defense that, in 1747, the date of the dedication, the Doctor was comparatively unknown; that he was himself then high in office, on which account alone the address was made to him; and that he could scarcely be expected, merely because he was an Earl and Secretary of State, to patronize every clever Grub Street author who might think it expedient to try to raise money out of him by a complimentary dedication. Such is the argument of one of our leading contemporary journals upon the other side of the water. It appears to us ill supported by the facts. Lord Chesterfield was not regarded as a common lord or as a common Secretary of State. He had a reputation of his own for taste and discrimination upon which he piqued himself. It was upon this reputation

that Dr. Johnson rested his application, without pretending to claim a knowledge of the man. It unquestionably gave him a right to hope, not that he would be made an intimate companion, but that the specimen furnished of his capacity to perform his task would from its own merit attract the great man's favorable attention and earn his patronage. It is the peculiar province of a Mæcenas to distinguish by his own sagacity the proper objects in whose favor to exert his influence, from those who are not so. Had his lordship pretended to no reputation in this way, his neglect of Johnson would scarcely have been deemed an error. But he must be judged by the standard which he furnishes for himself. There can now be little doubt that he did not appreciate the merit of the Doctor's proposal as he ought to have done; that he gave him ten guineas rather to get rid of him than from any idea of encouraging the prosecution of the great literary undertaking; and that it was not until after the Doctor's reputation was firmly established, when the aid of a patron was no longer so essential as it had been, that he saw his mistake, and endeavored to make a tardy reparation for it by publishing a couple of rather frivolous papers recommending the "Dictionary" in the periodical called "The World." Surely, under these circumstances, the vengeance which the Doctor took was not uncalled for. He felt that his lordship had only meted out to him the same measure which he did to every one, the same which every mere worldly man who forms himself upon his model will always do to those about him—that is, he had neglected merit while nobody else had found it out, and only then acknowledged it when it was no longer a secret. Dr. Johnson expressed his sense of this in a noble and dignified manner.

Chesterfield felt the rebuke to be too just ever to indulge in such hollow excuses as have been lately set up in his defense. It was one of many legitimate consequences of that system of morals which makes appearances and not the reality the great object to be cared for.

We now come to the consideration of his lordship's career as a statesman—and here we find very little to object to and something positively to commend. Without possessing any great and commanding views of public policy, he nevertheless held solid and judicious ones. He was, probably more than any one of his age, the exact representative of the common sense of the people of Great Britain, which strongly relucted against the whole of the Hanoverian policy, without being able to extricate itself from it. On that subject there have always been opposite opinions, and time must yet show which of them is abstractly correct. On the one hand, it must be conceded that, had England kept herself wholly clear from Continental alliances, she would never have arrived at the high point of power and glory upon which she now stands. On the other, it is equally undeniable that she would not have so rapidly developed the seeds of internal disorganization, under the forming process of a monstrous public debt. Lord Chesterfield had little or no adequate conception of the resources of his country, when he pronounced it on the brink of ruin in 1757, a moment at which it was just shooting up to the highest state of prosperity. "We are no longer a nation," says he; "I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect. . . . Ruin is so near," he writes in another place, "that, were Machiavel at the head of affairs, he could not retrieve them." Such was the state of despondency of his lordship, and he was by no means alone in it,

at the instant when the elder Pitt was called to the helm of state, and when he proved what all this croaking was good for. But it is the nature of timid politicians to be constantly looking at the dark side of things while they are in active life, and to predict irretrievable destruction after they retire. We have had many such on this side of the Atlantic, the non-fulfillment of whose gloomy prophecies has sadly disappointed themselves and their friends. From all which experience it is safe to arrive at the conclusion that great bodies move slowly, and that it takes a good while and a great many disasters, as well as long years of misgovernment, to crush the energies of a prosperous nation.

But it is in the administration of Irish affairs during the time his lordship filled the post of Viceroy that he has gained his greatest reputation. So sadly had that country suffered from its connection with the neighboring kingdom, that it hailed the accession of a man who did nothing more than abstain from wrong-doing, as if he were a savior. Even this negative species of excellence required on his part the exercise of no small skill and discretion, as well as much firmness. These were qualities strictly within the compass of his lordship's character. Of greatness or goodness we expect to find little. But all that worldly prudence and calm, shrewd, good sense could dictate, may very naturally be inferred. The moment at which he was called to the post was a critical one. It was in the midst of the great success of the Pretender in the year 1745. Yet not one of the many Papists who unquestionably wished well to that enterprise bestirred himself in any manner to advance it. Ireland has seldom been more tranquil than during this else-

where turbulent year. It is due to Chesterfield that he should receive praise for having contributed to this great result. He was, besides, a steady patron of temperance, at a time when and among a people by whom that virtue was not regarded with the same favor that it now is. He was also a decided opponent to the corruptions which long prevailed in that country in the form of government jobs. All this, joined with the fascinations of his address, excited the admiration and enthusiasm of that impulsive people. But it may reasonably be doubted whether he does not owe the greater part of his apparent success to the fact that he remained in office so short a time. Experience teaches us that it is seldom in the first, or even the second, year of a popular administration that it is most likely to have its strength put to the test. There must be time for discontent to find channels by which to vent itself, time for combinations to be formed, time for affecting the public mind. Those interested in deep settled abuses do not take much alarm, so long as remedies are only talked of. Nothing more was attempted by Chesterfield. It can not, therefore, be said that the intricate problem of Irish government has been solved in opposition to the conjoined experience of all other lords lieutenant, solely because his lordship succeeded in carrying it on acceptably for the space of eight months. Even in the midst of the praise which we would willingly accord to him for what he did or intended to do in this situation, some qualification must be made, as we now and then catch a glimpse of the principles upon which he acted. For an illustration, we must cite his reliance upon the gavel act to effect the decline of the Catholic faith. Now, the gavel act proposed neither more nor less than to bribe the mem-

bers of a family, with their own money, to sacrifice one another by betraying their religious faith. If the estate of a Papist was to be divided among his nearest relations, this law prescribed that they should share and share alike, unless some one of them would declare himself a convert to Protestantism, in which case he might take the whole. Such was the law which Lord Chesterfield, in a letter to a bishop of the Church, recommended should be strictly adhered to. And the most remarkable circumstance about it is, that it does not seem to have entered into his conception what kind of public and private morality he was encouraging. To him religion was merely a respectable and conservative civil institution. A conversion from one mode of faith to another was of little moment to him, who viewed them all with equal indifference.

It remains to us only to consider his lordship's character as a writer. This will rest in the main upon those letters to his son which he wrote in confidence and without any expectation of their ever coming before the public. Besides these, there are, however, a considerable number of essays, furnished for political and literary journals, from which we can gather a correct idea of his polished, as the others give one of his unguarded, style. The essays are remarkable for grace and a species of gentlemanly humor very much in keeping with the idea we have of their author. We might point out as examples the papers on dueling, on pride of birth, and ladies' fashions. Although it is difficult by an extract to give a full idea of them, yet we will venture upon the close of the "Essay on Dueling," not only on account of its irony, but of the more valuable truth which lies concealed beneath it :

There is one reason, indeed, which makes me suspect that a DUEL may not always be the infallible criterion of veracity ; and that is, that the combatants very rarely meet upon equal terms. I beg leave to state a case, which may very probably and not even unfrequently happen, and which is yet not provided for nor even mentioned in the INSTITUTES of HONOR.

A very lean, slender, active young fellow of great HONOR, weighing perhaps not quite twelve stone, and who has, from his youth, taken lessons of HOMICIDE from a murder-master, has, or thinks he has, a point of honor to discuss with an unwieldy, fat, middle-aged gentleman of nice HONOR likewise, weighing four-and-twenty stone, and who in his youth may not possibly have had the same commendable application to the noble science of HOMICIDE. The lean gentleman sends a very civil letter to the fat one, inviting him to come and be killed by him the next morning in Hyde Park. Should the fat gentleman accept this invitation, and waddle to the place appointed, he goes to inevitable slaughter. Now, upon this state of the case, might not the fat gentleman, consistent with the rules of HONOR, return the following answer to the invitation of the lean one ?

SIR : I find by your letter that you do me the justice to believe that I have the true notions of honor that become a gentleman ; and I hope I shall never give you reason to change your opinion. As I entertain the same opinion of you, I must suppose that you will not desire that we should meet upon unequal terms, which must be the case were we to meet to-morrow. At present I unfortunately weigh four-and-twenty stone, and I guess that you do not exceed twelve. From this circumstance singly, I am doubly the mark that you are ; but, besides this, you are active, and I am unwieldy. I therefore propose to you that, from this day forward, we severally endeavor, by all possible means, you to fatten and I to waste, till we can meet at the medium of eighteen stone. I will lose no time on my part, being impatient to prove to you that I am not quite unworthy of the good opinion which you are pleased to express of,

Sir, your very humble servant.

P. S.—I believe it may not be amiss for us to communicate to each other, from time to time, our gradations of increase or decrease toward the desired medium, in which, I presume, two or three pounds more or less, on either side, ought not to be considered.

Yet, though his essays are all of them pleasing specimens of delicate humor, they would not of themselves have redeemed his memory from oblivion. For this he is indebted entirely to the letters to his son, which, as specimens of a particular style of writing, though not always perfectly correct, are not exceeded in their way by anything in the language. Their principal merits are their perspicuity and elegance, without a shadow of affectation. In them will be found a great sum of worldly wisdom upon the minor morals, conveyed in the most direct and intelligible shape. Even Dr. Johnson admitted their merit, although he very justly put his seal of reprobation on their tendency. We can not, for instance, too highly approve of a passage like the following upon the employment of time :

You have, it is true, a great deal of time before you ; but, in this period of your life, one hour usefully employed may be worth more than four-and-twenty hereafter ; a minute is precious to you now, whole days may possibly not be so forty years hence. Whatever time you allow, or can snatch, for serious reading (I say snatch, because company and a knowledge of the world is now your chief object), employ it in the reading of some one book, and that a good one, till you have finished it ; and do not distract your mind with various matters at the same time. In this light I would recommend to you to read *tout de suite* "Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis," translated by Barbeyrac, and Puffendorf's "Jus Gentium," translated by the same hand. For accidental quarters of hours, read works of invention, wit, and humor of the best, and not of trivial authors, either ancient or modern.

Whatever business you have, do it the first moment you can ; never by halves, but finish it without interruption, if possible. Business must not be sauntered and trifled with ; and you must not say to it as Felix did to Paul, " At a more convenient season I will speak to thee." The most convenient season for business is the first ; but study and business, in some measure, point out their own times to a man of sense ; time is much oftener squandered away in the wrong choice and improper methods of amusement and pleasures.

Many people think that they are in pleasures provided they are neither in study nor in business. Nothing like it ; they are doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep. They contract habitudes from laziness, and they only frequent those places where they are free from all restraints and attentions. Be upon your guard against this idle profusion of time ; and let every place you go to be either the scene of quick and lively pleasures or the school of your improvements ; let every company you go into either gratify your senses, extend your knowledge, or refine your manners. Have some decent object of gallantry in view at some places ; frequent others where people of wit and taste assemble ; get into others where people of superior rank and dignity command respect and attention from the rest of the company ; but pray frequent no neutral places from mere idleness and indolence. Nothing forms a young man so much as being used to keep respectable and superior company, where a constant regard and attention is necessary. It is true this is at first a disagreeable state of restraint ; but it soon grows habitual, and consequently easy ; and you are amply paid for it by the improvement you make, and the credit it gives you. What you said some time ago was very true concerning *le Palais Royal* ; to one of your age the situation is disagreeable enough ; you can not expect to be much taken notice of ; but all that time you can take notice of others ; observe their manners, decipher their characters, and insensibly you will become one of the company (vol. ii., pp. 227, 228).

There is not in this extract, it is true, any intimation of the higher purposes for which time should be improved. The idea, as usual with his lordship, is limited within narrow and selfish bounds; yet, so far as it goes, it is sound and well conveyed. No man had a greater contempt than he for the vagabond fops who have since affected to quote him as authority for their idleness and their indifference. He understood the truth of the maxim that a man, in order to make himself respectable, must try to be employed. Neither did he imagine, like many of his rank in England, that a title and wealth excused him from the duty of exertion in something more respectable than the mere search after pleasure. His great defect was that he did not rest his notions of that duty upon a basis sufficiently broad. They all come back to the benefit to be gained in some form or other of personal advantage. They looked forth neither upon society, nor upon one's country, nor upon one's God. They were of a kind which wither under the approach of age. Thus it happened to himself that at fifty-four he retreated from the public service, not again to return to it, though invited more than once. He retired to cultivate cabbages and pine-apples, and to wear out the patience of both medical men and quacks in unavailing experiments to remedy the infirmities of his constitution. There is no cheerfulness nor dignity in the scene of his old age. His views of life are narrow, cold, and gloomy. So early as 1755, or nearly twenty years before his end, he indulges in the following strain of reflection, when addressing his friend the Bishop of Waterford:

My deafness grows gradually worse, which in my mind implies a total one before it be long. In this unhappy situation, which I

have reason to suppose will every day grow worse, I still keep up my spirits tolerably; that is, I am free from melancholy, which, I think, is all that can be expected. This I impute to that degree of philosophy which I have acquired by long experience of the world. I have enjoyed all its pleasures, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which in truth is very low; whereas those who have not experienced always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare; but I have been behind the scenes. It is a common notion, and like many common ones a very false one, that those who have led a life of pleasure and business can never be easy in retirement; whereas I am persuaded that they are the only people who can, if they have any sense and reflection. They can look back, *oculo irretorto*, upon what they from knowledge despise; others have always a hankering after what they are not acquainted with. I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream. When I say that I have no regret, I do not mean that I have no remorse; for a life of either business, or, still more, pleasure, never was nor never will be a state of innocence. But God, who knows the strength of human passions and the weakness of human reason, will, it is to be hoped, rather mercifully pardon than justly punish acknowledged errors (vol. iv., pp. 149, 150).

This letter was written to one of those whom his lordship somewhere else is pleased to designate as a species of constables "appointed by the sovereign power of a country to keep up decency and decorum in the Church." This may account for the unusual approximation to a religious feeling which we find in the extract. Yet what does this amount to? His lordship, satiated with the pleasures of life, looks back upon them with much the same feeling that a man in the morning has about his last night's debauch.

He has no warming sense of services rendered to others; of duty performed, perhaps imperfectly, but yet with an earnest and hearty will; of mutual kindness cultivated between himself and others; of humble resignation to the will of God! No! the scene, as he looks back upon it, is cold and wintry, showing marks only of scorching desolation from the heat of summer passions. And the present enjoyment, such as it is, proceeds from vacuity. Nor yet does he make it very clear that his own history disproves the correctness of the common notion which he condemns. His retirement will scarcely furnish encouragement to any who may be anxious to leave the busy world in quest of ease. His letters form one continued lament, partly owing to his increasing deafness, partly to disappointment as to his son's success, but most of all to the absence of all the nobler motives of action in life. This is the grand defect of his whole theory. The man is liable to outlive the system, and then the world becomes a dreary blank. Cut off from society, from public life, from the domestic affections, and from the consolations of a religious faith, Chesterfield was as much isolated at sixty as the blasted oak in the center of a barren heath. Yet over all this wretchedness there still remained, like a coat of steel upon a skeleton, the glazed and polished surface of good breeding which his lordship had laid on thick to conceal the deep defects of his early years. Even upon the bed of death, "Give Dayrolles a chair" were the last expressed thoughts of this worldly Earl. Not a single exalted sentiment fell from him, at that moment, to counteract the chill of a long career. He was indeed what he describes himself, one hackneyed in the ways of life. We have endeavored to show in his history the nature and the

advantages of such a training. Let those who are inclined to be fascinated by his example take warning by his fate.

In the view which we have taken, it will be seen that we have not dwelt upon the moral tendency of the advice to be found in the present work. This has already been so much descanted upon in many former publications, as well as in the pages of this journal, that little can be added. We shall therefore, avoiding the grosser passages, simply content ourselves with extracting from the maxims addressed by his lordship to his son such of them as seem most briefly to embody the character of the author :

In your friendships and in your enmities let your confidence and your hostilities have certain bounds ; make not the former dangerous, nor the latter irreconcilable. There are strange vicissitudes in business.

It is always right to detect a fraud, and to perceive a folly ; but it is often very wrong to expose either. A man of business should always have his eyes open, but must often seem to have them shut.

If you would be a favorite of your King, address yourself to his weaknesses. An application to his reason will seldom prove very successful.

A cheerful, easy countenance and behavior are very useful at court ; they make fools think you a good-natured man ; and they make designing men think you an undesigning one.

Flattery, though a base coin, is the necessary pocket-money at court ; where, by custom and consent, it has obtained such a currency that it is no longer a fraudulent but a legal payment.

The reputation of generosity is to be purchased pretty cheap ; it does not depend so much upon a man's general expense as it does upon his giving handsomely where it is proper to give at all (vol. ii., pp. 322-326).

It would seem, by the care which his lordship bestowed

upon the sketches of the principal persons of his time, as if he must have meditated some extensive work of an historical kind, in which they would naturally have found a place. Had the whole been executed with any portion of the spirit to be found in these fragments, the author would have earned a still higher reputation than he is likely now to hold. Among them, one of the most curious is the article relating to Lord Bute, which Dr. Maty, or his successor, thought proper to suppress, while he published in his edition most of the rest. The portraits of Sir Robert Walpole, of Lord Hardwicke, of the elder Pitt, of the Duke of Newcastle, and of Lord Bolingbroke, will continue for ever valuable to those who wish to understand the history of the early Brunswick princes. Chesterfield's habits made him a keen observer of the virtues and vices, the merits and the follies of other men; while his judgment was not warped, as that of many is apt to be, by any excess of sympathy with or of hostility to them. In this, as in all things else, he shows his great want to have been the want of a heart. We scarcely know how better to close this view of his character than, without meaning to excuse him, to apply his own remark upon a much bolder person than he in both extremes; we mean his friend Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, when he says of him, "Upon the whole of this extraordinary character, where good and ill were perpetually jostling each other, what can we say but, 'Alas! poor human nature!'"

DEFENSE OF POETRY.*

"GENTLE Sir Philip Sidney, thou knewest what belonged to a scholar; thou knewest what pains, what toil, what travel, conduct to perfection; well couldst thou give every virtue his encouragement, every art his due, every writer his desert, 'cause none more virtuous, witty, or learned than thyself."† This eulogium was bestowed upon one of the most learned and illustrious men that adorned the last half of the sixteenth century. Literary history is full of his praises. He is spoken of as the ripe scholar, the able statesman—"the soldier's, scholar's, courtier's eye, tongue, sword"—the man "whose whole life was poetry put into action." He and the Chevalier Bayard were the connecting links between the ages of chivalry and our own.

Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst, in West Kent, on the 29th of November, 1554, and died on the 16th day of October, 1586, from the wound of a musket-shot received under the walls of Zutphen, a town in Guelderland, on the banks of the Issel. When he was retiring from the field of battle an incident occurred which well illustrates his chivalrous spirit, and that goodness of heart which gained him

* The Defence of Poesy. By Sir Philip Sidney. Republished in the Library of the Old English Prose Writers. Vol. II.

† Nash's *Pierce Penniless*.

the appellation of the "*Gentle* Sir Philip Sidney." The circumstance has been made the subject of an historical painting by West. It is thus related by Lord Brooke :

The horse he rode upon was rather furiously choleric than bravely proud, and so forced him to forsake the field, but not his back, as the noblest and fittest bier to carry a martial commander to his grave. In which sad progress, passing along by the rest of the army where his uncle the General was, and being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for drink, which was presently brought him ; but, as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, he saw a poor soldier carried along, who had eaten his last at the same feast, ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle. Which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head, before he drank, and delivered it to the poor man, with these words, " Thy necessity is yet greater than mine."

The most celebrated productions of Sidney's pen are the "*Arcadia*" and the "*Defence of Poesy*." The former was written during the author's retirement at Wilton, the residence of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. Though so much celebrated in its day,* it is now little known, and still less read. Its very subject prevents it from being popular at present ; for now the pastoral reed seems entirely thrown aside. The muses no longer haunt the groves of *Arcadia*. The shepherd's song—the sound of oaten pipe, and the scenes of pastoral loves and jealousies, are no becoming

* Many of our readers will recollect the high-wrought eulogium of Harvey Pierce, when he consigned the work to immortality : " Live ever sweete, sweete booke : the simple image of his gentle witt ; and the golden pillar of his noble courage ; and ever notify unto the world that thy writer was the secretary of eloquence, the breath of the muses, the honey-bee of the daintiest flowers of witt and arte ; the pith of morale and intellectual virtues, the arme of Bellona in the field, the tongue of Suada in the chamber, the sprite of Practice in *esse*, and the paragon of excellency in print."

themes for the spirit of the age. Few at present take for their motto, "*flumina amo silvasque inglorius*," and, consequently, few read the "Arcadia."

The "Defence of Poesy" is a work of rare merit. It is a golden little volume, which the scholar may lay beneath his pillow, as Chrysostom did the works of Aristophanes. We do not, however, mean to analyze it in this place; but recommend to our readers to purchase this "sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge." It will be read with delight by all who have a taste for the true beauties of poetry; and may go far to remove the prejudices of those who have not. To this latter class we address the concluding remarks of the author:

So that since the ever-praiseworthy poesy is full of virtue, breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; since the blames laid against it are either false or feeble; since the cause why it is not esteemed in England is the fault of poet-apes, not poets; since, lastly, our tongue is most fit to honor poesy, and to be honored by poesy; I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of poesy; no more to laugh at the name of poets, as though they were next inheritors to fools; no more to jest at the reverend title of "a rhymers"; but to believe, with Aristotle, that they were the ancient treasurers of the Grecians' divinity; to believe, with Bembus, that they were the first bringers in of all civility; to believe, with Scaliger, that no philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man, than the reading of Virgil; to believe, with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus, that it pleased the heavenly Deity by Hesiod and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, logic, rhetoric, philosophy, natural and moral, and "quid non?" to believe, with me, that there are many mysteries contained in poetry, which

of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused; to believe, with Landin, that they are so beloved of the gods, that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury; lastly, to believe themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses.

Thus doing, your names shall flourish in the printers' shops; thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface; thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all; you shall dwell upon superlatives; thus doing, though you be "*libertino patre natus*," you shall suddenly grow "*Herculea proles*"—

"Si quid mea carmina possunt":

thus doing, your soul shall be placed with Dante's *Beatrix*, or Virgil's *Anchises*.

But if (fie of such a but!) you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you can not hear the planet-like music of poetry; if you have so earth-creeeping a mind that it can not lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a mome as to be a Momus of poetry; then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet's verses, as Bubonax was, to hang himself; nor to be rhymed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland; yet thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all poets; that while you live, you live in love, and never get favor, for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

As no "*Apologie for Poetrie*" has appeared among us, we hope that Sir Philip Sidney's "*Defence*" will be widely read and long remembered. O that in our country it might be the harbinger of as bright an intellectual day as it was in his own! With us, the spirit of the age is clamorous for utility—for visible, tangible utility—for bare, brawny, muscular utility. We would be roused to action by the voice of the

populace, and the sounds of the crowded mart, and not "lulled asleep in shady idleness with poet's pastimes." We are swallowed up in schemes for gain, and engrossed with contrivances for bodily enjoyments, as if this particle of dust were immortal—as if the soul needed no aliment, and the mind no raiment. We glory in the extent of our territory, in our rapidly increasing population, in our agricultural privileges, and our commercial advantages. We boast of the magnificence and beauty of our natural scenery—of the various climates of our sky—the summers of our Northern regions—the salubrious winters of the South, and of the various products of our soil, from the pines of our Northern highlands to the palm-tree and aloes of our Southern frontier. We boast of the increase and extent of our physical strength, the sound of populous cities, breaking the silence and solitude of our Western Territories—plantations conquered from the forest, and gardens springing up in the wilderness. Yet the true glory of a nation consists not in the extent of its territory, the pomp of its forests, the majesty of its rivers, the height of its mountains, and the beauty of its sky, but in the extent of its mental power—the majesty of its intellect—the height, and depth, and purity of its moral nature. It consists not in what nature has given to the body, but in what nature and education have given to the mind—not in the world around us, but in the world within us—not in the circumstances of fortune, but in the attributes of the soul—not in the corruptible, transitory, and perishable forms of matter, but in the incorruptible, the permanent, the imperishable mind. True greatness is the greatness of the mind—the true glory of a nation is moral and intellectual preëminence.

But still the main current of education runs in the wide and not well-defined channel of immediate and practical utility. The main point is how to make the greatest progress in worldly prosperity—how to advance most rapidly in the career of gain. This, perhaps, is necessarily the case to a certain extent in a country where every man is taught to rely upon his own exertions for a livelihood, and is the artificer of his own fortune and estate. But it ought not to be exclusively so. We ought not, in the pursuit of wealth and worldly honor, to forget those embellishments of the mind and the heart which sweeten social intercourse and improve the condition of society. And yet, in the language of Dr. Paley, “Many of us are brought up with this world set before us, and nothing else. Whatever promotes this world’s prosperity is praised; whatever hurts and obstructs this world’s prosperity is blamed; and there all praise and censure end. We see mankind about us in motion and action, but all these motions and actions directed to worldly objects. We hear their conversation, but it is all the same way. And this is what we see and hear from the first: The views which are continually placed before our eyes regard this life alone and its interests. Can it then be wondered at that an early worldly-mindedness is bred in our hearts so strong as to shut out heavenly-mindedness entirely?” And this, though not in so many words, yet in fact and in its practical tendency, is the popular doctrine of utility.

Now, under correction be it said, we are much led astray by this word utility. There is hardly a word in our language whose meaning is so vague, and so often misunderstood and misapplied. We too often limit its application to those acquisitions and pursuits which are of immediate and visible

profit to ourselves and the community; regarding as comparatively or utterly useless many others which, though more remote in their effects and more imperceptible in their operation, are, notwithstanding, higher in their aim, wider in their influence, more certain in their results, and more intimately connected with the common weal. We are too apt to think that nothing can be useful but what is done with a noise, at noonday, and at the corners of the streets; as if action and utility were synonymous, and it were not as useless to act without thinking as it is to think without acting. But the truth is, the word utility has a wider signification than this. It embraces in its proper definition whatever contributes to our happiness; and thus includes many of those arts and sciences, many of those secret studies and solitary avocations which are generally regarded either as useless or as absolutely injurious to society. Not he alone does service to the state whose wisdom guides her councils at home, nor he whose voice asserts her dignity abroad. A thousand little rills, springing up in the retired walks of life, go to swell the rushing tide of national glory and prosperity; and whoever in the solitude of his chamber, and by even a single effort of his mind, has added to the intellectual preëminence of his country, has not lived in vain, nor to himself alone. Does not the pen of the historian perpetuate the fame of the hero and the statesman? Do not their names live in the song of the bard? Do not the pencil and the chisel touch the soul while they delight the eye? Does not the spirit of the patriot and the sage, looking from the painted canvas, or eloquent from the marble lip, fill our hearts with veneration for all that is great in intellect and godlike in virtue?

If this be true, then are the ornamental arts of life not

merely ornamental, but at the same time highly useful; and poetry and the fine arts become the instruction as well as the amusement of mankind. They will not till our lands, nor freight our ships, nor fill our granaries and our coffers; but they will enrich the heart, freight the understanding, and make up the garnered fullness of the mind. And this we hold to be the true view of the subject.

Among the barbarous nations, which in the early centuries of our era overran the south of Europe, the most contumelious epithet which could be applied to a man was to call him a Roman. All the corruption and degeneracy of the Western Empire were associated, in the minds of the Gothic tribes, with a love of letters and the fine arts. So far did this belief influence their practice that they would not suffer their children to be instructed in the learning of the south. "Instruction in the sciences," said they, "tends to corrupt, enervate, and depress the mind; and he who has been accustomed to tremble under the rod of a pedagogue, will never look on a sword or a spear with an undaunted eye."* We apprehend that there are some, and indeed not a few in our active community, who hold the appellation of scholar and man of letters in as little repute as did our Gothic ancestors that of Roman; associating with it about the same ideas of effeminacy and inefficiency. They think that the learning of books is not wisdom; that study unfits a man for action; that poetry and nonsense are convertible terms; that literature begets an effeminate and craven spirit; in a word, that the dust and cobwebs of a library are a kind of armor, which will not stand long against the hard knocks

* Procop. de bello Gothor. ap. Robertson, History of Charles V., vol. i., p. 234.

of the "bone and muscle of the state" and the "huge two-fisted sway" of the stump orator. Whenever intellect is called into action, they would have the mind display a rough and natural energy—strength, straightforward strength, untutored in the rules of art, and unadorned by elegant and courtly erudition. They want the stirring voice of Demosthenes, accustomed to the roar of the tempest and the dashing of the sea upon its hollow-sounding shore, rather than the winning eloquence of Phalereus, coming into the sun and dust of the battle, not from the martial tent of the soldier, but from the philosophic shades of Theophrastus.

But against no branch of scholarship is the cry so loud as against poetry, "the quintessence, or rather the luxury of all learning." Its enemies pretend that it is injurious both to the mind and the heart; that it incapacitates us for the severer discipline of professional study; and that, by exciting the feelings and misdirecting the imagination, it unfits us for the common duties of life and the intercourse of this matter-of-fact world. And yet such men have lived, as Homer, and Dante, and Milton—poets and scholars whose minds were bathed in song, and yet not weakened; men who severally carried forward the spirit of their age, who soared upward on the wings of poetry, and yet were not unfitted to penetrate the deepest recesses of the human soul and search out the hidden treasures of wisdom and the secret springs of thought, feeling, and action. None fought more bravely at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea than did the poet Æschylus. Richard Cœur-de-Lion was a poet; but his boast was in his very song:

"Bon guerrier à l'estendart
Trouvaretz le Roi Richard."

Ercilla and Garcilaso were poets; but the great epic of Spain was written in the soldier's tent and on the field of battle, and the descendant of the Incas was slain in the assault of a castle in the south of France. Cervantes lost an arm at the battle of Lepanto, and Sir Philip Sidney was the breathing reality of the poet's dream, a living and glorious proof that poetry neither enervates the mind nor unfits us for the practical duties of life.

Nor is it less true that the legitimate tendency of poetry is to exalt rather than to debase—to purify rather than to corrupt. Read the inspired pages of the Hebrew prophets; the eloquent aspirations of the Psalmist! Where did ever the spirit of devotion bear up the soul more steadily and loftily than in the language of their poetry? And where has poetry been more exalted, more spirit-stirring, more admirable, or more beautiful, than when thus soaring upward on the wings of sublime devotion, the darkness and shadows of earth beneath it, and from above the brightness of an opened heaven pouring around it? It is true the poetic talent may be, for it has been, most lamentably perverted. But when poetry is thus perverted—when it thus forgets its native sky to grovel in what is base, sensual, and depraved—though it may not have lost all its original brightness, nor appear less than “the excess of glory obscured,” yet its birthright has been sold, its strength has been blasted, and its spirit wears “deep scars of thunder.”

It does not, then, appear to be the necessary nor the natural tendency of poetry to enervate the mind, corrupt the heart, or incapacitate us for performing the private and public duties of life. On the contrary, it may be made, and

should be made, an instrument for improving the condition of society, and advancing the great purpose of human happiness. Man must have his hours of meditation as well as of action. The unities of time are not so well preserved in the great drama, but that moments will occur when the stage must be left vacant, and even the busiest actors pass behind the scenes. There will be eddies in the stream of life, though the main current sweeps steadily onward, till "it pours in full cataract over the grave." There are times when both mind and body are worn down by the severity of daily toil; when the grasshopper is a burden, and, thirsty with the heat of labor, the spirit longs for the waters of Shiloah that go softly. At such seasons both mind and body should unbend themselves; they should be set free from the yoke of their customary service, and thought take some other direction than that of the beaten, dusty thoroughfare of business. And there are times, too, when the divinity stirs within us; when the soul abstracts herself from the world, and the slow and regular motions of earthly business do not keep pace with the heaven-directed mind. Then earth lets go her hold; the soul feels herself more akin to heaven; and soaring upward, the denizen of her native sky, she "begins to reason like herself, and to discourse in a strain above mortality." Call, if you will, such thoughts and feelings the dreams of the imagination; yet they are no unprofitable dreams. Such moments of silence and meditation are often those of the greatest utility to ourselves and others. Yes, we would dream awhile, that the spirit is not always the bondman of the flesh; that there is something immortal in us, something which, amid the din of life, urges us to aspire after the attributes of a more spiritual nature.

Let the cares and business of the world sometimes sleep, for this sleep is the awakening of the soul.

To fill up these interludes of life with a song, that shall soothe our worldly passions and inspire us with a love of heaven and virtue, seems to be the peculiar province of poetry. On this moral influence of the poetic art, there is a beautifully written passage in the "Defence of Poesy":

The philosopher sheweth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousness of the way and of the pleasant lodging you shall have when your journey is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may divert you from your way; but this is to no man, but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive, studious painfulness; which constant desire whosoever hath in him hath already passed half the hardness of the way, and therefore is beholden to the philosopher but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought that, where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book; since in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although not in the words of art which philosophers bestow upon us; for out of natural conceit the philosophers drew it; but to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, "*hoc opus, hic labor est.*"

Now, therein, of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it; nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass farther. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness, but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accom-

panied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music ; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner ; and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue.

In fine, we think that all the popular objections against poetry may be not only satisfactorily but triumphantly answered. They are all founded upon its abuse, and not upon its natural and legitimate tendencies. Indeed, popular judgment has seldom fallen into a greater error than that of supposing that poetry must necessarily, and from its very nature, convey false and therefore injurious impressions. The error lies in not discriminating between what is true to nature and what is true to fact. From the very nature of things, neither poetry nor any one of the imitative arts can in itself be false. They can be false no further than, by the imperfection of human skill, they convey to our minds imperfect and garbled views of what they represent. Hence a painting or poetical description may be true to nature, and yet false in point of fact. The canvas before you may represent a scene in which every individual feature of the landscape shall be true to nature—the tree, the waterfall, the distant mountain—every object there shall be an exact copy of an original that has a real existence, and yet the scene itself may be absolutely false in point of fact. Such a scene, with the features of the landscape combined precisely in the way represented, may exist nowhere but in the imagination of the artist. The statue of the Venus de' Medici is the perfection of female beauty ; and every individual feature had its living original. Still, the statue itself had no living archetype. It is true to nature, but it is not

true to fact. So with the stage. The scene represented, the characters introduced, the plot of the piece, and the action of the performers may all be conformable to nature, and yet not be conformable to any preëxisting reality. The characters there personified may never have existed; the events represented may never have transpired. And so, too, with poetry. The scenes and events it describes, the characters and passions it portrays, may all be natural though not real. Thus, in a certain sense, fiction itself may be true—true to the nature of things, and consequently true in the impressions it conveys. And hence the reason why fiction has always been made so subservient to the cause of truth.

Allowing, then, that poetry is nothing but fiction, that all it describes is false in point of fact, still its elements have a real existence, and the impressions we receive can be erroneous so far only as the views presented to the mind are garbled and false to nature. And this is a fault incident to the artist, and not inherent in the art itself. So that we may fairly conclude, from these considerations, that the natural tendency of poetry is to give us correct moral impressions, and thereby advance the cause of truth and the improvement of society.

There is another very important view of the subject arising out of the origin and nature of poetry, and its intimate connection with individual character and the character of society.

The origin of poetry loses itself in the shades of a remote and fabulous age, of which we have only vague and uncertain traditions. Its fountain, like that of the river of the desert, springs up in a distant and unknown region, the theme of visionary story and the subject of curious specu-

lation. Doubtless, however, it originated amid the scenes of pastoral life and in the quiet and repose of a golden age. There is something in the soft melancholy of the groves which pervades the heart and kindles the imagination. Their retirement is favorable to the musings of the poetic mind. The trees that waved their leafy branches to the summer wind or heaved and groaned beneath the passing storm, the shadow moving on the grass, the bubbling brook, the insect skimming on its surface, the receding valley and the distant mountain—these would be some of the elements of pastoral song. Its subject would naturally be the complaint of a shepherd and the charms of some gentle shepherdess—

“ A happy soul, that all the way
To heaven hath a summer's day.”

It is natural, too, that the imagination, familiar with the outward world, and connecting the idea of the changing seasons and the spontaneous fruits of the earth with the agency of some unknown power that regulated and produced them, should suggest the thought of presiding deities, propitious in the smiling sky and adverse in the storm. The fountain that gushed up as if to meet the thirsty lip was made the dwelling of a nymph; the grove that lent its shelter and repose from the heat of noon became the abode of dryads; a god presided over shepherds and their flocks, and a goddess shook the yellow harvest from her lap. These deities were propitiated by songs and festive rites. And thus poetry added new charms to the simplicity and repose of bucolic life, and the poet mingled in his verse the delights of rural ease and the praise of the rural deities which bestowed them.

Such was poetry in those happy ages, when, camps and courts unknown, life was itself an eclogue. But in later days it sang the achievements of Grecian and Roman heroes, and pealed in the war-song of the Gothic Skald. These early essays were rude and unpolished. As nations advanced in civilization and refinement poetry advanced with them. In each successive age, it became the image of their thoughts and feelings, of their manners, customs, and characters; for poetry is but the warm expression of the thoughts and feelings of a people, and we speak of it as being national when the character of a nation shines visibly and distinctly through it.

Thus, for example, Castilian poetry is characterized by sounding expressions, and that pomp and majesty so peculiar to Spanish manners and character. On the other hand, English poetry possesses in a high degree the charms of rural and moral feeling; it flows onward like a woodland stream, in which we see the reflection of the sylvan landscape and of the heaven above us.

It is from this intimate connection of poetry with the manners, customs, and characters of nations, that one of its highest uses is drawn. The impressions produced by poetry upon national character, at any period, are again reproduced, and give a more pronounced and individual character to the poetry of a subsequent period. And hence it is that the poetry of a nation sometimes throws so strong a light upon the page of its history, and renders luminous those obscure passages which often baffle the long-searching eye of studious erudition. In this view, poetry assumes new importance with all who search for historic truth. Besides, the view of the various fluctuations of the human mind, as

exhibited, not in history, but in the poetry of successive epochs, is more interesting, and less liable to convey erroneous impressions, than any record of mere events. The great advantage drawn from the study of history is not to treasure up in the mind a multitude of disconnected facts, but from these facts to derive some conclusions, tending to illustrate the movements of the general mind, the progress of society, the manners, customs, and institutions, the moral and intellectual character of mankind in different nations, at different times, and under the operation of different circumstances. Historic facts are chiefly valuable as exhibiting intellectual phenomena. And, so far as poetry exhibits these phenomena more perfectly and distinctly than history does, so far is it superior to history. The history of a nation is the external symbol of its character; from it we reason back to the spirit of the age that fashioned its shadowy outline. But poetry is the spirit of the age itself—embodied in the forms of language, and speaking in a voice that is audible to the external as well as the internal sense. The one makes known the impulses of the popular mind, through certain events resulting from them; the other displays the more immediate presence of that mind, visible in its action, and presaging those events. The one is like the marks left by the thunderstorm—the blasted tree—the purified atmosphere; the other like the flash from the bosom of the cloud, or the voice of the tempest, announcing its approach. The one is the track of the ocean on its shore; the other the continual movement and murmur of the sea.

Besides, there are epochs which have no contemporaneous history; but have left in their popular poetry pretty ample materials for estimating the character of the times.

The events, indeed, therein recorded may be exaggerated facts, or vague traditions, or inventions entirely apocryphal; yet they faithfully represent the spirit of the ages which produced them; they contain direct allusions and incidental circumstances, too insignificant in themselves to have been fictitious, and yet on that very account the most important parts of the poem in an historical point of view. Such, for example, are the "Nibelungen Lied" in Germany; the "Poema del Cid" in Spain; and the "Songs of the Troubadours" in France. Hence poetry comes in for a large share in that high eulogy which, in the true spirit of the scholar, a celebrated German critic has bestowed upon letters: "If we consider literature in its widest sense, as the voice which gives expression to human intellect—as the aggregate mass of symbols, in which the spirit of an age or the character of a nation is shadowed forth, then indeed a great and various literature is, without doubt, the most valuable possession of which any nation can boast.*

From all these considerations, we are forced to the conclusion that poetry is a subject of far greater importance in itself, and in its bearing upon the condition of society, than the majority of mankind would be willing to allow. We heartily regret that this opinion is not a more prevailing one in our land. We give too little encouragement to works of imagination and taste. The vocation of the poet does not stand high enough in our esteem; we are too cold in admiration, too timid in praise. The poetic lute and the high-sounding lyre are much too often and too generally looked upon as the baubles of effeminate minds, or bells and rattles to please

* Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature*, vol. i., lec. vii.

the ears of children. The prospect, however, brightens. But a short time ago, not a poet "moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped"; and now we have a host of them—three or four good ones, and three or four hundred poor ones. This, however, we will not stop to cavil about at present. To those of them who may honor us by reading our article we would whisper this request—that they should be more original, and withal more national. It seems every way important that now, while we are forming our literature, we should make it as original, characteristic, and national as possible. To effect this, it is not necessary that the war-whoop should ring in every line, and every page be rife with scalps, tomahawks, and wampum. Shade of Tecumseh forbid! The whole secret lies in Sidney's maxim—"Look in thy heart and write." For—

"Cantars non pot gaire valer.

Si d'inz del cor no mov lo chang."*

Of this anon. We will first make a few remarks upon the word *national*, as applied to the literature of a country; for when we speak of a national poetry we do not employ the term in that vague and indefinite way in which many writers use it.

A national literature, then, in the widest signification of the words, embraces every mental effort made by the inhabitants of a country, through the medium of the press. Every book written by a citizen of a country belongs to its national literature. But the term has also a more peculiar and appropriate definition; for, when we say that the literature of a country is *national*, we mean that it bears upon it the stamp of national character. We refer to those distinguishing

* "The poet's song is little worth,
If it moveth not from within the heart."

features which literature receives from the spirit of a nation—from its scenery and climate, its historic recollections, its government, its various institutions—from all those national peculiarities which are the result of no positive institutions; and, in a word, from the thousand external circumstances, which either directly or indirectly exert an influence upon the literature of a nation, and give it a marked and individual character, distinct from that of the literature of other nations.

In order to be more definite and more easily understood in these remarks, we will here offer a few illustrations of the influence of external causes upon the character of the mind, the peculiar habits of thought and feeling, and consequently the general complexion of literary performances. From the causes enumerated above, we select natural scenery and climate as being among the most obvious in their influence upon the prevailing tenor of poetic composition. Every one who is acquainted with the works of the English poets must have noted that a moral feeling and a certain rural quiet and repose are among their most prominent characteristics. The features of their native landscape are transferred to the printed page, and as we read we hear the warble of the skylark—the “hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain.” The shadow of the woodland scene lends a pensive shadow to the ideal world of poetry:

“ Why lure me from these pale retreats ?
Why rob me of these pensive sweets ?
Can Music’s voice, can Beauty’s eye,
Can Painting’s glowing hand supply,
A charm so suited to my mind,
As blows this hollow gust of wind,

As drops this little weeping rill,
Soft tinkling down the moss-grown hill,
While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray? ”*

In the same richly poetic vein are the following lines from Collins's "Ode to Evening ":

“ Or if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,

“ And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
The dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.”

In connection with the concluding lines of these two extracts, and as an illustration of the influence of climate on the character of poetry, it is worthy of remark that the English poets excel those of the south of Europe in their descriptions of morning and evening. They dwell with long delight and frequent repetition upon the brightening glory of the hour, when “the northern wagoner has set his sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre”; and upon the milder beauty of departing day, when “the bright-haired sun sits in yon western tent.” What, for example, can be more descriptive of the vernal freshness of a morning in May than the often quoted song in “Cymbeline ”?—

“ Hark ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that *lies* ;

* Mason's Ode to a Friend.

And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes ;
With everything that pretty bin ;
My lady sweet, arise ;
Arise, arise !”

How full of poetic feeling and imagery is the following description of the dawn of day, taken from Fletcher’s “Faithful Shepherdess” !—

“ See, the day begins to break,
And the light shoots like a streak
Of subtle fire, the wind blows cold,
While the morning doth unfold ;
Now the birds begin to rouse,
And the squirrel from the boughs
Leaps, to get him nuts and fruit ;
The early lark that erst was mute,
Carols to the rising day
Many a note and many a lay.”

Still more remarkable than either of these extracts, as a graphic description of morning, is the following from Beattie’s “Minstrel” :

“ But who the melodies of morn can tell ?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain’s side ;
The lowing herd ; the sheepfold’s simple bell ;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lonely valley ; echoing far and wide,
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above ;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide ;
The hum of bees, and linnet’s lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

“ The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark ;
Crowned with her pail, the tripping milkmaid sings ;
The whistling plowman stalks afield ; and hark !
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings ;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs ;
Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour ;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings ;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower ;
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tower.”

Extracts of this kind we might multiply almost without number. The same may be said of similar ones, descriptive of the gradual approach of evening and the close of day. But we have already quoted enough for our present purpose. Now, to what peculiarities of natural scenery and climate may we trace these manifold and beautiful descriptions, which in their truth, delicacy, and poetic coloring surpass all the pictures of the kind in Tasso, Guarini, Boscan, Garcilaso, and, in a word, all the most celebrated poets of the south of Europe? Doubtless, to the rural beauty which pervades the English landscape, and to the long morning and evening twilight of a northern climate.

Still, with all this taste for the charms of rural description and sylvan song, pastoral poetry has never been much cultivated nor much admired in England. The “*Arcadia*” of Sir Philip Sidney, it is true, enjoyed a temporary celebrity, but this was, doubtless, owing in a great measure to the rank of its author ; and though the pastorals of Pope are still read and praised, their reputation belongs in part to their author’s youth at the time of their composition. Nor is this remarkable. For though the love of rural ease is characteristic of the English, yet the rigors of their climate render

their habits of pastoral life anything but delightful. In the mind of an Englishman, the snowy fleece is more intimately associated with the weaver's shuttle than with the shepherd's crook. Horace Walpole has a humorous passage in one of his letters on the affectation of pastoral habits in England. "In short," says he, "every summer one lives in a state of mutiny and murmur, and I have found the reason; it is because we will affect to have a summer, and we have no title to any such thing. Our poets learned their trade of the Romans, and so adopted the terms of their masters. They talk of shady groves, purling streams, and cooling breezes, and we get sore throats and agues by attempting to realize these visions. Master Damon writes a song, and invites Miss Chloe to enjoy the cool of the evening, and the deuce a bit have we of any such thing as a *cool* evening. Zephyr is a northeast wind, that makes Damon button up to the chin, and pinches Chloe's nose till it is red and blue; and they cry, *This is a bad summer*; as if we ever had any other. The best sun we have is made of Newcastle coal, and I am determined never to reckon upon any other." On the contrary, the poetry of the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese is redolent of the charms of pastoral indolence and enjoyment; for they inhabit countries in which pastoral life is a reality and not a fiction, where the winter's sun will almost make you seek the shade, and the summer nights are mild and beautiful in the open air. The babbling brook and cooling breeze are luxuries in a southern clime, where you

"See the sun set, sure he'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling, weak as
A drunken man's dead eye, in maudlin sorrow,
But with all heaven t' himself."

A love of indolence and a warm imagination are characteristic of the inhabitants of the South. These are natural effects of a soft, voluptuous climate. It is there a luxury to let the body lie at ease, stretched by a fountain in the lazy stillness of a summer noon, and suffer the dreamy fancy to lose itself in idle reverie and give a form to the wind and a spirit to the shadow and the leaf. Hence the prevalence of personification and the exaggerations of figurative language, so characteristic of the poetry of southern nations. As an illustration, take the following beautiful sonnet from the Spanish. It is addressed to a mountain brook :

“ Laugh of the mountain ! lyre of bird and tree !
Mirror of morn, and garniture of fields !
The soul of April, that so gently yields
The rose and jasmine bloom, leaps wild in thee !

“ Although, where’er thy devious current strays,
The lap of earth with gold and silver teems,
To me thy clear proceeding brighter seems
Than golden sands, that charm each shepherd’s gaze.

“ How without guile thy bosom, all transparent
As the pure crystal, lets the curious eye
Thy secrets scan, thy smooth round pebbles count !
How, without malice murmuring, glides thy current !
O sweet simplicity of days gone by !
Thou shunnest the haunts of man, to dwell in limpid fount ! ” *

* “ Risa del monte, de las aves lira !
pompa del prado, espejo de la aurora !
alma de Abril, espíritu de Flora
por quien la rosa y el jazmin espira !

We will pursue these considerations no longer, for fear of digressing too far. What we have already said will illustrate, perhaps superficially, but sufficiently for our present purpose, the influence of natural scenery and climate upon the character of poetical composition. It will at least show that in speaking of this influence we did not speak at random and without a distinct meaning. Similar and much more copious illustrations of the influence of various other external circumstances on national literature might here be given. But it is not our intention to go into details. They will naturally suggest themselves to the mind of every reflecting reader.

We repeat, then, that we wish our native poets would give a more national character to their writings. In order to effect this they have only to write more naturally, to write from their own feelings and impressions, from the influence of what they see around them, and not from any preconceived notions of what poetry ought to be, caught by reading many books and imitating many models. This is peculiarly true in descriptions of natural scenery. In these let us have no more skylarks and nightingales. For us they only warble in books. A painter might as well introduce

“Aunque tu curso en cuantos pasos gira
tanta jurisdiccion argenta y dora,
tu claro proceder mas me enamora
que lo que en tí todo pastor admira.

“Cuan sin engaño tus entrañas puras
dejan por transparente vidriera
las guijuelas al número patentes !

“Cuan sin malicia cándida murmuras !
O sencillez de aquella edad primera,
huyes del hombre y vives en las fuentes.”

an elephant or a rhinoceros into a New England landscape. We would not restrict our poets in the choice of their subjects or the scenes of their story; but, when they sing under an American sky and describe a native landscape, let the description be graphic, as if it had been seen and not imagined. We wish, too, to see the figures and imagery of poetry a little more characteristic, as if drawn from nature and not from books. Of this we have constantly recurring examples in the language of our North American Indians. Our readers will all recollect the last words of Pushmataha, the Choctaw chief, who died at Washington in the year 1824: "I shall die, but you will return to your brethren. As you go along the paths you will see the flowers and hear the birds; but Pushmataha will see them and hear them no more. When you come to your home they will ask you, 'Where is Pushmataha?' and you will say to them, 'He is no more.' They will hear the tidings *like the sound of the fall of a mighty oak in the stillness of the wood.*" More attention on the part of our writers to these particulars would give a new and delightful expression to the face of our poetry. But the difficulty is, that instead of coming forward as bold, original thinkers, they have imbibed the degenerate spirit of modern English poetry. They have hitherto been imitators either of decidedly bad, or of at best very indifferent models. It has been the fashion to write strong lines—to aim at point and antithesis. This has made writers turgid and extravagant. Instead of ideas they give us merely the signs of ideas. They erect a great bridge of words, pompous and imposing, where there is hardly a drop of thought to trickle beneath. Is not he who thus apostrophizes the clouds, "Ye posters of the wakeless air!" quite as extrava-

gant as the Spanish poet who calls a star a "burning doubloon of the celestial bank"? ("Doblon ardiente del celeste banco!")

This spirit of imitation has spread far and wide. But a few years ago what an aping of Lord Byron exhibited itself throughout the country! It was not an imitation of the brighter characteristics of his intellect, but a mimicry of his sullen misanthropy and irreligious gloom. We do not wish to make a bugbear of Lord Byron's name, nor figuratively to disturb his bones; still we can not but express our belief that no writer has done half so much to corrupt the literary taste as well as the moral principle of our country as the author of "*Childe Harold*."* Minds that could not understand his beauties could imitate his great and glaring defects. Souls that could not fathom his depths could grasp the straw and bubbles that floated upon the agitated surface, until at length every city, town, and village had its little Byron, its self-tormenting scoffer at morality, its gloomy

* We here subjoin Lord Byron's own opinion of the poetical taste of the present age. It is from a letter in the second volume of Moore's "*Life of Byron*." "With regard to poetry in general, I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he and *all* of us—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I—are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly *Pope*, whom I tried in this way: I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with *Pope's*, and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, learning, effect, and even *imagination*, passion, and *invention* between the Queen Anne's man and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and Claudian now, among us; and if I had to begin again, I would mold myself accordingly."

misanthropist in song. Happily, this noxious influence has been in some measure checked and counteracted by the writings of Wordsworth, whose pure and gentle philosophy has been gradually gaining the ascendancy over the bold and visionary speculations of an unhealthy imagination. The sobriety, and if we may use the expression, the republican simplicity of his poetry, are in unison with our moral and political doctrines. But even Wordsworth, with all his simplicity of diction and exquisite moral feeling, is a very unsafe model for imitation; and it is worth while to observe how invariably those who have imitated him have fallen into tedious mannerism. As the human mind is so constituted that all men receive to a greater or less degree a complexion from those with whom they are conversant, the writer who means to school himself to poetic composition—we mean so far as regards style and diction—should be very careful what authors he studies. He should leave the present age and go back to the olden time. He should make, not the writings of an individual, but the whole body of English classical literature his study. There is a strength of expression, a clearness, and force and raciness of thought in the elder English poets which we may look for in vain among those who flourish in these days of verbiage. Truly, the degeneracy of modern poetry is no schoolboy declamation! The stream, whose fabled fountain gushes from the Grecian mount, flowed brightly through those ages, when the souls of men stood forth in the rugged freedom of nature and gave a wild and romantic character to the ideal landscape. But in these practical days, whose spirit has so unsparingly leveled to the even surface of utility the bold irregularities of human genius, and lopped off the luxuriance of poetic

feeling which once lent its grateful shade to the haunts of song, that stream has spread itself into stagnant pools which exhale an unhealthy atmosphere, while the party-colored bubbles that glitter on its surface show the corruption from which they spring.

Another circumstance which tends to give an effeminate and unmanly character to our literature is the precocity of our writers. Premature exhibitions of talent are an unstable foundation to build a national literature upon. Roger Ascham, the schoolmaster of princes, and for the sake of antithesis, we suppose, called the Prince of Schoolmasters, has well said of precocious minds: "They be like trees that shoue forth faire blossoms and broad leaves in spring-time, but bring out small and not long-lasting fruit in harvest-time; and that only such as fall and rott before they be ripe, and so never or seldome come to any good at all." It is natural that the young should be enticed by the wreaths of literary fame, whose hues are so passing beautiful even to the more sober-sighted, and whose flowers breathe around them such exquisite perfumes. Many are deceived into a misconception of their talents by the indiscreet and indiscriminate praise of friends. They think themselves destined to redeem the glory of their age and country; to shine as "bright particular stars"; but in reality their genius

"Is like the glow-worm's light the apes so wondered at,
Which, when they gathered sticks and laid upon't,
And blew—and blew—turned tail and went out presently."

We have set forth the portrait of modern poetry in rather gloomy colors; for we really think that the greater part of what is published in this book-writing age ought in justice

to suffer the fate of the children of Thetis, whose immortality was tried by fire. We hope, however, that ere long some one of our most gifted bards will throw his fetters off, and, relying on himself alone, fathom the recesses of his own mind, and bring up rich pearls from the secret depths of thought.

We will conclude these suggestions to our native poets by quoting Ben Jonson's "Ode to Himself," which we address to each of them individually :

"Where do'st thou careless lie
Buried in ease and sloth?
Knowledge, that sleeps, doth die;
And this securitie

It is the common moth
That eats on wits, and arts, and quite destroys them both.

"Are all th' Aonian springs
Dri'd up? lies Thespia waste?
Doth Clarius' harp want strings,
That not a nymph now sings!
Or droop they as disgrac't,

To see their seats and bowers by chatt'ring pies defac't?

"If hence thy silence be,
As 'tis too just a cause,
Let this thought quicken thee,
Minds that are great and free
Should not on fortune pause;

'Tis crowne enough to virtue still, her owne applause.

"What though the greedy frie
Be taken with false baytes
Of worded balladrie,
And thinke it poesie?

They die with their conceits,
And only pitious scorne upon their folly waites."

*NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.**

THE traveler by the Eastern Railroad, from Boston, reaches in less than an hour the old town of Salem, Massachusetts. It is chiefly composed of plain wooden houses, but it has a quaint air of past provincial grandeur, and has indeed been an important commercial town. The first American ship for Calcutta and China sailed from this port; and Salem ships opened our trade with New Holland and the South Seas. But its glory has long since departed, with that of its stately and respectable neighbors, Newburyport and Portsmouth. There is still, however, a custom-house in Salem, there are wharves, and chandlers' shops, and a faint show of shipping, and an air of marine capacity which no apparent result justifies. It sits upon the shore like an antiquated sea-captain, grave and silent, in tarpaulin and duck trousers, idly watching the ocean upon which he will never sail again.

But this touching aspect of age and lost prosperity merely serves to deepen the peculiar impression of the old city, which is not derived from its former commercial importance, but from other associations. Salem village was a famous

* The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 16 vols. 12mo.

place in the Puritan annals. The tragedy of the witchcraft tortures and murders has cast upon it a ghostly spell, from which it seems never to have escaped; and even the sojourner of to-day, as he loiters along the shore in the sunniest morning of June, will sometimes feel an icy breath in the air, chilling the very marrow of his bones. Nor is he consoled by being told that it is only the east wind; for he can not help believing that an invisible host of Puritan specters have breathed upon him, revengeful, as he poached upon their ancient haunts.

The Puritan spirit was neither gracious nor lovely, but nothing softer than its iron hand could have done its necessary work. The Puritan character was narrow, intolerant, and exasperating. The forefathers were very "sour" in the estimation of Morton and his merry company at Mount Wollaston. But, for all that, Bradstreet, and Carver, and Winthrop, were better forefathers than the gay Morton, and the Puritan spirit is doubtless the moral influence of modern civilization, both in Old and New England. By the fruit let the seed be judged. The State to whose rough coast the Mayflower came, and in which the Pilgrim spirit has been most active, is to-day the chief of all human societies, politically, morally, and socially. It is the community in which the average of well-being is higher than in any state we know in history. Puritan though it be, it is more truly liberal and free than any large community in the world. But it had bleak beginnings. The icy shore, the somber pines, the stealthy savages, the hard soil, the unbending religious austerity, the Scriptural severity, the arrogant virtues, the angry intolerance of contradiction—they all made a narrow strip of sad civilization between the pitiless sea

and the remorseless forests. The moral and physical tenacity which is wrestling with the rebellion was toughened among these flinty and forbidding rocks. The fig, the pomegranate, and the almond would not grow there, nor the nightingale sing; but nobler men than its children the sun never shone upon, nor has the heart of man heard sweeter music than the voices of James Otis and Samuel Adams. Think of Plymouth in 1620, and of Massachusetts to-day! Out of strength came forth sweetness.

With some of the darkest passages in Puritan history this old town of Salem, which dozes apparently with the most peaceful conscience in the world, is identified, and while its Fourth of July bells were joyfully ringing sixty years ago Nathaniel Hawthorne was born. He subsequently chose to write the name Hawthorne, because he thought he had discovered that it was the original spelling. In the introduction to "*The Scarlet Letter*," Hawthorne speaks of his ancestors as coming from Europe in the seventeenth century, and establishing themselves in Salem, where they served the state and propitiated Heaven by joining in the persecution of Quakers and witches. The house known as the Witch House is still standing on the corner of Summer and Essex Streets. It was built in 1642 by Captain George Corwin, and here in 1692 many of the unfortunates who were palpably guilty of age and ugliness were examined by the Honorable Jonathan Curwin, Major Gedney, Captain John Higginson, and John Hathorn, Esquire.

The name of this last worthy occurs in one of the first and most famous of the witch trials—that of "Goodwife Cory," in March, 1692, only a month after the beginning of

the delusion at the house of the minister Parris. Goodwife Cory was accused by ten children, of whom Elizabeth Parris was one ; they declared that they were pinched by her, and strangled, and that she brought them a book to sign. " Mr. Hathorn, a magistrate of Salem," says Robert Calef, in " More Wonders of the Invisible World," " asked her why she afflicted these children. She said she did not afflict them. He asked her who did then. She said, ' I do not know ; how should I know ? ' She said they were poor, distracted creatures, and no heed ought to be given to what they said. Mr. Hathorn and Mr. Noyes replied that it was the judgment of all that were there present that they were bewitched, and only she (the accused) said they were distracted. She was accused by them that the *black man* whispered to her in her ear now (while she was upon examination), and that she had a yellow bird that did use to suck between her fingers, and that the said bird did suck now in the assembly." John Hathorn and Jonathan Curwin were " the assistants " of Salem village, and held most of the examinations and issued the warrants. Justice Hathorn was very swift in judgment, holding every accused person guilty in every particular. When poor Jonathan Cary, of Charlestown, attended his wife charged with witchcraft before Justice Hathorn, he requested that he might hold one of her hands, " but it was denied me. Then she desired me to wipe the tears from her eyes and the sweat from her face, which I did ; then she desired that she might lean herself on me, saying she should faint. Justice Hathorn replied she had strength enough to torment these persons, and she should have strength enough to stand. I speaking something against their cruel proceedings, they commanded me

to be silent, or else I should be turned out of the room." What a piteous picture of the awful Colonial Inquisition and the village Torquemada! What a grim portrait of an ancestor to hang in your memory, and to trace your kindred to!

Hawthorne's description of his ancestors in the Introduction to "*The Scarlet Letter*" is very delightful. As their representative, he declares that he takes shame to himself for their sake, on account of these relentless persecutions; but he thinks them earnest and energetic. "From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea; a gray-headed shipmaster, in each generation, retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grandsire. The boy also, in due time, passed from the fore-castle to the cabin, spent a tempestuous manhood, and returned from his world-wanderings, to grow old, and die, and mingle his dust with the natal earth." Not all, however, for the last of the line of sailors, Captain Nathaniel Hawthorne, who married Elizabeth Clarke Manning, died at Calcutta after the birth of three children, a boy and two girls. The house in which the boy was born is still standing upon Union Street, which leads to the Long Wharf, the chief seat of the old foreign trade of Salem. The next house, with a back entrance on Union Street, is the Manning house, where many years of the young Hawthorne's life were spent in the care of his uncle Robert Manning. He lived often upon an estate belonging to his mother's family, in the town of Raymond, near Sebago Lake, in Maine. The huge house there was called Manning's Folly, and is now

said to be used as a meeting-house. His uncle sent Hawthorne to Bowdoin College, where he graduated in 1825. A correspondent of the "Boston Daily Advertiser," writing from Bowdoin at the late Commencement, says that he had recently found "in an old drawer" some papers which proved to be the manuscript "parts" of the students at the Junior exhibition of 1824; among them was Hawthorne's "De Patribus Conscriptis Romanorum." "It is quite brief," writes the correspondent, "but it is really curious as perhaps the only college exercise in existence of the great tragic writer of our day (has there been a greater since Shakespeare?). The last sentence is as follows; note the words which I put in italics: 'Augustus equidem antiquam magnificentiam patribus reddidit, *sed fulgor tantum fuit sine fervore*. Nunquam in republica senatoribus potestas recuperata, postremum species etiam amissa est.' On the same occasion Longfellow had the salutatory oration in Latin—'Oratio Latina—Anglici Poetæ.'"

Hawthorne has given us a charming glimpse of himself as a college boy in the letter to his fellow student, Horatio Bridge, of the Navy, whose "Journal of an African Cruiser" he afterward edited: "I know not whence your faith came; but while we were lads together at a country college—gathering blueberries, in study-hours, under those tall academic pines; or watching the great logs as they tumbled along the current of the Androscoggin; or shooting pigeons and gray-squirrels in the woods; or bat-fowling in the summer twilight; or catching trouts in that shadowy little stream which, I suppose, is still wandering riverward through the forest—though you and I will never cast a line in it again—two idle lads, in short (as we need not fear to acknowledge now),

doing a hundred things that the Faculty never heard of, or else it had been the worse for us—still it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny, that he was to be a writer of fiction." From this sylvan university Hawthorne came home to Salem; "as if," he wrote later, "Salem were for me the inevitable center of the universe."

The old witch-hanging city had no weirder product than this dark-haired son. He has certainly given it an interest which it must otherwise have lacked; but he speaks of it with small affection, considering that his family had lived there for two centuries. "An unjoyous attachment," he calls it. And, to tell the truth, there was evidently little love lost between the little city and its most famous citizen. Stories still float in the social gossip of the town, which represent the shy author as inaccessible to all invitations to dinner and tea; and while the pleasant circle awaited his coming in the drawing-room, the impracticable man was—at least so runs the tale—quietly hobnobbing with companions to whom his fame was unknown. Those who coveted him as a phoenix could never get him, while he gave himself freely to those who saw in him only a placid barn-door fowl. The sensitive youth was a recluse, upon whose imagination had fallen the gloomy mystery of Puritan life and character. Salem was the inevitable center of his universe more truly than he thought. The mind of Justice Hathorn's descendant was bewitched by the fascination of a certain devilish subtlety working under the comeliest aspects in human affairs. It overcame him with strange sympathy. It colored and controlled his intellectual life.

Devoted all day to lonely reverie and musing upon the obscurer spiritual passages of the life whose monuments he

constantly encountered, that musing became inevitably morbid. With the creative instinct of the artist, he wrote the wild fancies into form as stories, many of which, when written, he threw into the fire. Then, after nightfall, stealing out from his room into the silent streets of Salem, and shadowy as the ghosts with which to his susceptible imagination the dusky town was thronged, he glided beneath the house in which the witch-trials were held, or across the moonlight hill upon which the witches were hung, until the spell was complete. Nor can we help fancying that, after the murder of old Mr. White in Salem, which happened within a few years after his return from college, which drew from Mr. Webster his most famous criminal plea, and filled a shadowy corner of every museum in New England, as every shivering little man of that time remembers, with an awful reproduction of the scene in wax-figures, with real sheets on the bed, and the murderer in a glazed cap stooping over to deal the fatal blow—we can not help fancying that the young recluse who walked by night, the wizard whom as yet none knew, hovered about the house, gazing at the windows of the fatal chamber, and listening in horror for the faint whistle of the confederate in another street.

Three years after he graduated in 1828 he published anonymously a slight romance with the motto from Southey, "Wilt thou go with me?" Hawthorne never acknowledged the book, and it is now seldom found; but it shows plainly the natural bent of his mind. It is a dim, dreamy tale, such as a Byron-struck youth of the time might have written, except for that startling self-possession of style and cold analysis of passion, rather than sympathy with it, which showed no imitation, but remarkable original power. The same

lurid gloom overhangs it that shadows all his works. It is uncanny; the figures of the romance are not persons, they are passions, emotions, spiritual speculations. So the "Twice-told Tales," that seem at first but the pleasant fancies of a mild recluse, gradually hold the mind with a Lamia-like fascination; and the author says truly of them, in the preface of 1851: "Even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver." There are sunny gleams upon the pages, but a strange, melancholy chill pervades the book. In "The Wedding Knell," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Gentle Boy," "Wakefield," "The Prophetic Pictures," "The Hollow of the Three Hills," "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "The Ambitious Guest," "The White Old Maid," "Edward Fane's Rosebud," "The Lily's Quest"—or in the "Legends of the Province House," where the courtly provincial state of governors and ladies glitters across the small, sad New England world, whose very baldness jeers it to scorn—there is the same fateful atmosphere in which Goody Cloyse might at any moment whisk by upon her broomstick, and in which the startled heart stands still with unspeakable terror.

The spell of mysterious horror which kindled Hawthorne's imagination was a test of the character of his genius. The mind of this child of witch-haunted Salem loved to hover between the natural and the supernatural, and sought to tread the almost imperceptible and doubtful line of contact. He instinctively sketched the phantoms that have the figures of men, but are not human; the elusive, shadowy scenery which, like that of Gustave Doré's

pictures, is Nature sympathizing in her forms and aspects with the emotions of terror or awe which the tale excites. His genius broods entranced over the evanescent phantasmagoria of the vague debatable land in which the realities of experience blend with ghostly doubts and wonders.

But from its poisonous flowers what a wondrous perfume he distilled! Through his magic reed into what penetrating melody he blew that deathly air! His relentless fancy seemed to seek a sin that was hopeless, a cruel despair that no faith could throw off. Yet his *naïve* and well-poised genius hung over the gulf of blackness and peered into the pit with the steady nerve and simple face of a boy. The mind of the reader follows him with an aching wonder and admiration, as the bewildered old mother forester watched Undine's gambols. As Hawthorne describes Miriam in "The Marble Faun," so may the character of his genius be most truly indicated. Miriam, the reader will remember, turns to Hilda and Kenyon for sympathy. "Yet it was to little purpose that she approached the edge of the voiceless gulf between herself and them. Standing on the utmost verge of that dark chasm, she might stretch out her hand and never clasp a hand of theirs; she might strive to call out, 'Help, friends! help!' but, as with dreamers when they shout, her voice would perish inaudibly in the remoteness that seemed such a little way. This perception of an infinite, shivering solitude, amid which we can not come close enough to human beings to be warmed by them, and where they turn to cold, chilly shapes of mist, is one of the most forlorn results of any accident, misfortune, crime, or peculiarity of character that puts an individual ajar with the world."

Thus it was because the early New England life made so much larger account of the supernatural element than any other modern civilized society, that the man whose blood had run in its veins instinctively turned to it. But beyond this alluring spell of its darker and obscurer individual experience, it seems neither to have touched his imagination nor even to have aroused his interest. To Walter Scott the romance of feudalism was precious, for the sake of feudalism itself, in which he believed with all his soul, and for that of the heroic old feudal figures which he honored. He was a Tory in every particle of his frame, and his genius made him the poet of Toryism. But Hawthorne had apparently no especial political, religious, or patriotic affinity with the spirit which inspired him. It was solely a fascination of the intellect. And although he is distinctively the poet of the Puritans, although it is to his genius that we shall always owe that image of them which the power of "The Scarlet Letter" has imprinted upon literature, and doubtless henceforth upon historical interpretation, yet what an imperfect picture of that life it is! All its stern and melancholy romance is there—its picturesque gloom and intense passion; but upon those quivering pages, as in every passage of his stories drawn from that spirit, there seems to be wanting a deep, complete, sympathetic appreciation of the fine moral heroism, the spiritual grandeur, which overhung that gloomy life, as a delicate purple mist suffuses in summer twilights the bald crags of the crystal hills. It is the glare of "The Scarlet Letter" itself, and all that it luridly reveals and weirdly implies, which produced the tale. It was not beauty in itself, nor deformity, not virtue nor vice, which engaged the author's deepest sympathy. It was the

occult relation between the two. Thus while the Puritans were of all men pious, it was the instinct of Hawthorne's genius to search out and trace with terrible tenacity the dark and devious thread of sin in their lives.

Human life and character, whether in New England two hundred years ago or in Italy to-day, interested him only as they were touched by this glamour of somber spiritual mystery; and the attraction pursued him in every form in which it appeared. It is as apparent in the most perfect of his smaller tales, "*Rappaccini's Daughter*," as in "*The Scarlet Letter*," "*The Blithedale Romance*," "*The House of the Seven Gables*," and "*The Marble Faun*." You may open almost at random, and you are as sure to find it as to hear the ripple in Mozart's music or the pathetic minor in a Neapolitan melody. Take, for instance, "*The Birth-Mark*," which we might call the best of the smaller stories if we had not just said the same thing of "*Rappaccini's Daughter*"—for so even and complete is Hawthorne's power that, with few exceptions, each work of his, like *Benvenuto's*, seems the most characteristic and felicitous. In this story a scholar marries a beautiful woman upon whose face is a mark which has hitherto seemed to be only a greater charm. Yet in one so lovely the husband declares that, although it is the slightest possible defect, it is yet the mark of earthly imperfection, and he proceeds to lavish all the resources of science to procure its removal. But it will not disappear; and at last he tells her that the crimson hand "has clutched its grasp" into her very being, and that there is mortal danger in trying the only means of removal that remains. She insists that it shall be tried. It succeeds; but it removes the stain and her life together. So in "*Rappaccini's Daughter*—

ter." The old philosopher nourishes his beautiful child upon the poisonous breath of a flower. She loves, and her lover is likewise bewitched. In trying to break the spell, she drinks an antidote which kills her. The point of interest in both stories is the subtle connection, in the first, between the beauty of Georgiana and the taint of the birth-mark; and, in the second, the loveliness of Beatrice and the poison of the blossom.

This, also, is the key of his last romance, "The Marble Faun," one of the most perfect works of art in literature, whose marvelous spell begins with the very opening words: "Four individuals, in whose fortunes we should be glad to interest the reader, happened to be standing in one of the saloons of the sculpture gallery in the Capitol at Rome." When these words are read, the mind familiar with Hawthorne is already enthralled. What a journey is beginning, not a step of which is trodden, and yet the heart palpitates with apprehension! Through what delicate, rosy lights of love, and soft, shimmering humor, and hopes and doubts and vanishing delights, that journey will proceed, on and on into utter gloom! And it does so, although "Hilda had a hopeful soul, and saw sunlight on the mountain-tops." It does so, because Miriam and Donatello are the figures which interest us most profoundly, and they are both lost in the shadow. Donatello, indeed, is the true center of interest, as he is one of the most striking creations of genius. But the perplexing charm of Donatello, what is it but the doubt that does not dare to breathe itself, the appalled wonder whether, if the breeze should lift those clustering locks a little higher, he would prove to be faun or man? It never does lift them; the doubt is never solved, but it is always

suggested. The mystery of a partial humanity, morally irresponsible but humanly conscious, haunts the entrancing page. It draws us irresistibly on. But as the cloud closes around the lithe figure of Donatello, we hear again from its hidden folds the words of "The Birth-Mark": "Thus ever does the gross fatality of earth exult in its invariable triumph over the immortal essence, which, in this dim sphere of half-development, demands the completeness of a higher state." Or still more sadly, the mysterious youth, half vanishing from our sympathy, seems to murmur, with Beatrice Rappaccini, "And still as she spoke, she kept her hand upon her heart—'Wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon my child?'"

We have left the story of Hawthorne's life sadly behind. But his life had no more remarkable events than holding office in the Boston Custom-House under Mr. Bancroft as collector; working for some time with the Brook Farmers, from whom he soon separated, not altogether amicably; marrying and living in the old manse at Concord; returning to the Custom-House in Salem as surveyor; then going to Lenox, in Berkshire, where he lived in what he called "the ugliest little old red farmhouse that you ever saw," and where the story is told of his shyness, that, if he saw anybody coming along the road whom he must probably pass, he would jump over the wall into the pasture, and so give the stranger a wide berth; back again to Concord; then to Liverpool as consul; traveling in Europe afterward, and home at last and for ever, to "The Wayside," under the Concord hill. "The hillside," he wrote to a friend in 1852, "is covered chiefly with locust-trees, which come into luxuriant blossom in the month of June, and look and smell very

sweetly, intermixed with a few young elms and some white-pines and infant oaks, the whole forming rather a thicket than a wood. Nevertheless, there is some very good shade to be found there; I spend delectable hours there in the hottest part of the day, stretched out at my lazy length with a book in my hand or an unwritten book in my thoughts. There is almost always a breeze stirring along the side or brow of the hill."

It is not strange, certainly, that a man such as has been described, of a morbid shyness, the path of whose genius diverged always out of the sun into the darkest shade, and to whom human beings were merely psychological phenomena, should have been accounted ungenial, and sometimes even hard, cold, and perverse. From the bent of his intellectual temperament it happens that in his simplest and sweetest passages he still seems to be studying and curiously observing, rather than sympathizing. You can not help feeling constantly that the author is looking askance both at his characters and you, the reader; and many a young and fresh mind is troubled strangely by his books, as if it were aware of a half-Mephistophelean smile upon the page. Nor is this impression altogether removed by the remarkable familiarity of his personal disclosures. There was never a man more shrinkingly retiring, yet surely never was an author more naively frank. He is willing that you should know all that a man may fairly reveal of himself. The great interior story he does not tell, of course, but the introduction to the "Mosses from an Old Manse," the opening chapter of "The Scarlet Letter," and the "Consular Experiences," with much of the rest of "Our Old Home," are as intimate and explicit chapters of autobiography as can be found. Nor would it

be easy to find anywhere a more perfect idyl than that introductory chapter of the "Mosses." Its charm is perennial and indescribable; and why should it not be, since it was written at a time in which, as he says, "I was happy"? It is, perhaps, the most softly-hued and exquisite work of his pen. So the sketch of "The Custom-House," although prefatory to that most tragically powerful of romances, "The Scarlet Letter," is an incessant play of the shyest and most airy humor. It is like the warbling of bobolinks before a thunder-burst. How many other men, however unreserved with the pen, would be likely to dare to paint, with the fidelity of Teniers and the simplicity of Fra Angelico, a picture of the office and the companions in which and with whom they did their daily work? The Surveyor of Customs in the port of Salem treated the town of Salem, in which he lived and discharged his daily task, as if it had been, with all its people, as vague and remote a spot as the town of which he was about to treat in the story. He commented upon the place and the people as modern travelers in Pompeii discuss the ancient town. It made a great scandal. He was accused of depicting with unpardonable severity worthy folks, whose friends were sorely pained and indignant. But he wrote such sketches as he wrote his stories. He treated his companions as he treated himself and all the personages in history or experience with which he dealt, merely as phenomena to be analyzed and described, with no more private malice or personal emotion than the sun, which would have photographed them, warts and all.

Thus it was that the great currents of human sympathy never swept him away. The character of his genius isolated him, and he stood aloof from the common interests. Intent

upon studying men in certain aspects, he cared little for man; and the high tides of collective emotion among his fellows left him dry and untouched. So he beholds and describes the generous impulse of humanity with skeptical courtesy rather than with hopeful cordiality.

He does not chide you if you spend effort and life itself in the ardent van of progress, but he asks simply, "Is six so much better than half a dozen?" He will not quarrel with you if you expect the millennium to-morrow. He only says, with that glimmering smile, "So soon?" Yet in all this there was no shadow of spiritual pride. Nay, so far from this, that the tranquil and pervasive sadness of all Hawthorne's writings, the kind of heart-ache that they leave behind, seems to spring from the fact that his nature was related to the moral world, as his own Donatello was to the human. "So alert, so alluring, so noble," muses the heart as we climb the Apennines toward the tower of Monte Beni—"alas! is he human?" it whispers, with a pang of doubt.

How this directed his choice of subjects, and affected his treatment of them, when drawn from early history, we have already seen. It is not, therefore, surprising that the history into which he was born interested him only in the same way.

When he went to Europe as consul, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was already published, and the country shook with the fierce debate which involved its life. Yet eight years later Hawthorne wrote with calm *ennui*: "No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple

daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land." Is crime never romantic, then, until distance ennobles it? Or were the tragedies of Puritan life so terrible that the imagination could not help kindling, while the pangs of the plantation are superficial and commonplace? Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, and Thackeray were able to find a shadow even in "merrie England." But our great romancer looked at the American life of his time with these marvelous eyes, and could see only monotonous sunshine. That the devil, in the form of an elderly man clad in grave and decent attire, should lead astray the saints of Salem village, two centuries ago, and confuse right and wrong in the mind of Goodman Brown, was something that excited his imagination, and produced one of his weirdest stories. But that the same devil, clad in a somber sophism, was confusing the sentiment of right and wrong in the mind of his own countrymen he did not even guess. The monotonous sunshine disappeared in the blackest storm. The commonplace prosperity ended in tremendous war. What other man of equal power, who was not intellectually constituted precisely as Hawthorne was, could have stood merely perplexed and bewildered, harassed by the inability of positive sympathy, in the vast conflict which tosses us all in its terrible vortex?

In political theories and in an abstract view of war men may differ. But this war is not to be dismissed as a political difference. Here is an attempt to destroy the government of a country, not because it oppressed any man, but because its evident tendency was to secure universal justice under law. It is therefore a conspiracy against human nature. Civilization itself is at stake; and the warm blood of the noblest youth is everywhere flowing in as sacred a cause as

history records—flowing not merely to maintain a certain form of government, but to vindicate the rights of human nature. Shall there not be sorrow and pain, if a friend is merely impatient or confounded by it—if he sees in it only danger or doubt, and not hope for the right—or if he seem to insinuate that it would have been better if the war had been avoided, even at that countless cost to human welfare by which alone the avoidance was possible?

Yet, if the view of Hawthorne's mental constitution which has been suggested be correct, this attitude of his, however deeply it may be regretted, can hardly deserve moral condemnation. He knew perfectly well that if a man has no ear for music he had better not try to sing. But the danger with such men is, that they are apt to doubt if music itself be not a vain delusion. This danger Hawthorne escaped. There is none of the shallow persiflage of the skeptic in his tone, nor any affectation of cosmopolitan superiority. Mr. Edward Dicey, in his interesting reminiscences of Hawthorne, published in "*Macmillan's Magazine*," illustrates this very happily :

To make his position intelligible, let me repeat an anecdote which was told me by a very near friend of his and mine, who had heard it from President Pierce himself. Frank Pierce had been, and was to the day of Hawthorne's death, one of the oldest of his friends. At the time of the Presidential election of 1856, Hawthorne, for once, took part in politics, wrote a pamphlet in favor of his friend, and took a most unusual interest in his success. When the result of the nomination was known, and Pierce was President-elect, Hawthorne was among the first to come and wish him joy. He sat down in the room moodily and silently, as he was wont when anything troubled him; then, without speaking a word, he shook

Pierce warmly by the hand, and at last remarked, "Ah, Frank, what a pity!" The moment the victory was won that timid, hesitating mind saw the evils of the successful course—the advantages of the one which had not been followed. So it was always. Of two lines of action, he was perpetually in doubt which was the best; and so, between the two, he always inclined to letting things remain as they are.

Nobody disliked slavery more cordially than he did; and yet the difficulty of what was to be done with the slaves weighed constantly upon his mind. He told me once, that, while he had been consul at Liverpool, a vessel arrived there with a number of negro sailors, who had been brought from slave States, and would, of course, be enslaved again on their return. He fancied that he ought to inform the men of the fact, but then he was stopped by the reflection—who was to provide for them if they became free? and, as he said with a sigh, "while I was thinking, the vessel sailed." So, I recollect, on the old battle-field of Manassas, in which I strolled in company with Hawthorne, meeting a batch of runaway slaves—worn, footsore, wretched, and helpless beyond conception; we gave them food and wine, some small sums of money, and got them a lift upon a train going northward; but not long afterward Hawthorne turned to me with the remark: "I am not sure we were doing right, after all. How can those poor beings find food and shelter away from home?" Thus this ingrained and inherent doubt incapacitated him from following any course vigorously. He thought, on the whole, that Wendell Phillips and Lloyd Garrison and the abolitionists were in the right, but then he was never quite certain that they were not in the wrong, after all; so that his advocacy of their cause was of a very uncertain character. He saw the best, to alter slightly the famous Horatian line, but he never could quite make up his mind whether he altogether approved of its wisdom, and therefore followed it but falteringly.

"Better to bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of,"

expressed the philosophy to which Hawthorne was thus borne imperceptibly. Unjustly, but yet not unreasonably, he was looked upon as a pro-slavery man, and suspected of Southern sympathies. In politics he was always halting between two opinions; or, rather, holding one opinion, he could never summon up his courage to adhere to it and it only.

The truth is, that his own times and their people and their affairs were just as shadowy to him as those of any of his stories, and his mind held the same curious, half-wistful poise among all the conflicts of principle and passion around him, as among those of which he read and mused. If you ask why this was so—how it was that the tragedy of an old Italian garden, or the sin of a lonely Puritan parish, or the crime of a provincial judge, should so stimulate his imagination with romantic appeals and harrowing allegories, while either it did not see a Carolina slave-pen, or found in it only a tame prosperity—you must take your answer in the other question, why he did not weave into any of his stories the black and bloody thread of the Inquisition. His genius obeyed its law. When he wrote like a disembodied intelligence of events with which his neighbors' hearts were quivering—when the same half smile flutters upon his lips in the essay "About War Matters," sketched as it were upon the battle-field, as in that upon "Fire-Worship," written in the rural seclusion of the mossy Manse—ah, me! it is Donatello in his tower of Monte Beni, contemplating with doubtful interest the field upon which the flower of men are dying for an idea. Do you wonder, as you see him and hear him, that your heart, bewildered, asks and asks again, "Is he human? Is he a man?"

Now that Hawthorne sleeps by the tranquil Concord,

upon whose shores the old Manse was his bridal bower, those who knew him chiefly there revert beyond the angry hour to those peaceful days. How dear the old Manse was to him he has himself recorded; and in the opening of the "Tanglewood Tales" he pays his tribute to that placid landscape, which will always be recalled with pensive tenderness by those who, like him, became familiar with it in happy hours. "To me," he writes, "there is a peculiar, quiet charm in these broad meadows and gentle eminences. They are better than mountains, because they do not stamp and stereotype themselves into the brain, and thus grow wearisome with the same strong impression repeated day after day. A few summer weeks among mountains, a lifetime among green meadows and placid slopes, with outlines for ever new, because continually fading out of the memory—such would be my sober choice." He used to say, in those days—when, as he was fond of insisting, he was the obscurest author in the world, because, although he had told his tales twice, nobody cared to listen—that he never knew exactly how he contrived to live. But he was then married, and the dullest eye could not fail to detect the feminine grace and taste that ordered the dwelling, and perceive the tender sagacity that made all things possible.

Such was his simplicity and frugality that, when he was left alone for a little time in his new Arcadia, he would dismiss "the help," and, with some friend of other days who came to share his loneliness, he cooked the easy meal and washed up the dishes. No picture is clearer in the memory of a certain writer than that of the magician, in whose presence he almost lost his breath, looking at him over a dinner-plate which he was gravely wiping in the kitchen, while the

handy friend, who had been a Western settler, scoured the kettle at the door. Blithedale, where their acquaintance had begun, had not allowed either of them to forget how to help himself. It was amusing to one who knew this native independence of Hawthorne, to hear, some years afterward, that he wrote the "campaign" "Life of Franklin Pierce" for the sake of getting an office. That such a man should do such a work was possibly incomprehensible, to those who did not know him, upon any other supposition, until the fact was known that Mr. Pierce was an old and constant friend. Then it was explained. Hawthorne asked simply how he could help his friend; and he did the only thing he could do for that purpose. But although he passed some years in public office, he had neither taste nor talent for political life. He owed his offices to works quite other than political. His first and second appointments were virtually made by his friend Mr. Bancroft, and the third by his friend Mr. Pierce. His claims were perceptible enough to friendship, but would hardly have been so to a caucus.

In this brief essay we have aimed only to indicate the general character of the genius of Hawthorne, and to suggest a key to his peculiar relation to his time. The reader will at once see that it is rather the man than the author who has been described; but this has been designedly done, for we confess a personal solicitude, shared, we are very sure, by many friends of Nathaniel Hawthorne, that there shall not be wanting to the future student of his works such light as acquaintance with the man may throw upon them, as well as some picture of the impression his personality made upon his contemporaries.

Strongly formed, of dark, poetic gravity of aspect, lighted

by the deep, gleaming eye that recoiled with girlish coyness from contact with your gaze; of rare courtesy and kindness in personal intercourse, yet so sensitive that his look and manner can be suggested by the word glimmering; giving you a sense of restrained impatience to be away; mostly silent in society, and speaking always with an appearance of effort, but with a lambent light of delicate humor playing over all he said in the confidence of familiarity, and firm self-possession under all, as if the glimmering manner were only the tremulous surface of the sea—Hawthorne was personally known to few, and intimately to very few. But no one knew him without loving him, or saw him without remembering him; and the name of Nathaniel Hawthorne, which when it was first written was supposed to be fictitious, is now one of the most enduring facts of English literature.

*JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.**

No American writer has been so extensively read as James Fenimore Cooper. His novels have been translated into nearly every European language. Nay, we are told—but hardly know how to believe it—that they may be had duly rendered into Persian at the bazaars of Ispahan. We have seen some of them well thumbed and worn at a little village in a remote mountainous district of Sicily; and in Naples and Milan the bookstalls bear witness that “*L’Ultimo dei Mohecanni*” is still a popular work. In England, these American novels have been eagerly read and transformed into popular dramas; while cheap and often stupidly mutilated editions of them have been circulated through all her colonies, garrisons, and naval stations, from New Zealand to Canada.

Nor is this widely-spread popularity undeserved. Of all American writers Cooper is the most original, the most thoroughly national. His genius drew aliment from the soil where God had planted it, and rose to a vigorous growth, rough and gnarled, but strong as a mountain cedar. His volumes are a faithful mirror of that rude transatlantic

* The Works of James Fenimore Cooper. Author's revised edition. New York: G. P. Putnam. 1851. 12mo.

nature which to European eyes appears so strange and new. The sea and the forest have been the scenes of his countrymen's most conspicuous achievements; and it is on the sea and in the forest that Cooper is most thoroughly at home. Their spirit inspired him, their images were graven on his heart; and the men whom their embrace has nurtured, the sailor, the hunter, the pioneer, move and act upon his pages with all the truth and energy of real life.

There is one great writer with whom Cooper has been often compared, and the comparison is not void of justice; for though, on the whole, far inferior, there are certain high points of literary excellence in regard to which he may contest the palm with Sir Walter Scott. It is true that he has no claim to share the humor and pathos, the fine perception of beauty and delicacy in character, which add such charms to the romances of Scott. Nor can he boast that compass and variety of power which could deal alike with forms of humanity so diverse; which could portray with equal mastery the Templar Bois Guilbert, and the Jewess Rebecca; the manly heart of Henry Morton, and the gentle heroism of Jeanie Deans. But notwithstanding this unquestioned inferiority on the part of Cooper, there were marked affinities between him and his great contemporary. Both were practical men, able and willing to grapple with the hard realities of life. Either might have learned with ease to lead a regiment, or command a line-of-battle ship. Their conceptions of character were no mere abstract ideas, or unsubstantial images, but solid embodiments in living flesh and blood. Bulwer and Hawthorne—the conjunction may excite a smile—are writers of a different stamp. Their conceptions are often exhibited with consummate skill, and, in one of these

examples at least, with admirable truthfulness; but they never cheat us into a belief in their reality. We may marvel at the skill of the artist, but we are prone to regard his creations rather as figments of art than as reproductions of nature—as a series of vivified and animate pictures, rather than as breathing men and women. With Scott and with Cooper it is far otherwise. Dominie Sampson and the antiquary are as distinct and familiar to our minds as some eccentric acquaintance of our childhood. If we met Long Tom Coffin on the wharf at New Bedford, we should wonder where we had before seen that familiar face and figure. The tall, gaunt form of Leatherstocking, the weather-beaten face, the bony hand, the cap of fox-skin, and the old hunting-frock, polished with long service, seem so palpable and real, that in some moods of mind one may easily confound them with the memories of his own experiences. Others have been gifted to conceive the elements of far loftier character, and even to combine these in a manner equally truthful; but few have rivaled Cooper in the power of breathing into his creations the breath of life, and turning the phantoms of his brain into seeming realities. It is to this, in no small measure, that he owes his widely spread popularity. His most successful portraitures are drawn, it is true, from humble walks and rude associations; yet they are instinct with life, and stamped with the impress of a masculine and original genius.

The descriptions of external nature with which Cooper's works abound bear a certain analogy to his portraitures of character. There is no glow upon his pictures, no warm and varied coloring, no studied contrast of light and shade. Their virtue consists in their fidelity, in the strength with

which they impress themselves upon the mind, and the strange tenacity with which they cling to the memory. For our own part, it was many years since we had turned the pages of Cooper, but still we were haunted by the images which his spell had evoked—the dark gleaming of hill-embosomed lakes, the tracery of forest boughs against the red evening sky, and the raven flapping his black wings above the carnage-field near the Horicon. These descriptions have often, it must be confessed, the grave fault of being overloaded with detail; but they are utterly mistaken who affirm, as some have done, that they are but a catalogue of commonplaces—mountains and woods, rivers and torrents, thrown together as a matter of course. A genuine love of nature inspired the artist's pen; and they who can not feel the efficacy of its strong picturing have neither heart nor mind for the grandeur of the outer world.

Before proceeding, however, we must observe that, in speaking of Cooper's writings, we have reference only to those happier offsprings of his genius which form the basis of his reputation; for, of that numerous progeny which have of late years swarmed from his pen, we have never read one, and therefore, notwithstanding the ancient usage of reviewers, do not think ourselves entitled to comment upon them.

The style of Cooper is, as style must always be, in no small measure the exponent of the author's mind. It is not elastic or varied, and is certainly far from elegant. Its best characteristics are a manly directness, and a freedom from those prettinesses, studied turns of expression, and petty tricks of rhetoric, which are the pride of less masculine writers. Cooper is no favorite with *dilettanti* critics. In truth, such criticism does not suit his case. He should be

measured on deeper principles, not by his manner, but by his pith and substance. A rough diamond—and he is one of the roughest—is worth more than a jewel of paste, though its facets may not shine so clearly.

And yet, try Cooper by what test we may, we shall discover in him grave defects. The field of his success is, after all, a narrow one; and even in his best works he often oversteps its limits. His attempts at sentiment are notoriously unsuccessful. Above all, when he aspires to portray a heroine, no words can express the remarkable character of the product. With simple country girls he succeeds somewhat better; but, when he essays a higher flight, his failure is calamitous. The most rabid asserter of the rights of woman is scarcely more ignorant of woman's true power and dignity. This is the more singular, as his novels are very far from being void of feeling. They seldom, however—and who can wonder at it?—find much favor with women, who for the most part can see little in them but ghastly stories of shipwrecks, ambuscades, and bush-fights, mingled with prolix descriptions and stupid dialogues. Their most appreciating readers may perhaps be found, not among persons of sedentary and studious habits, but among those of a more active turn, military officers and the like, whose tastes have not been trained into fastidiousness, and who are often better qualified than literary men to feel the freshness and truth of the author's descriptions.

The merit of a novelist is usually measured less by his mere power of description than by his skill in delineating character. The permanency of Cooper's reputation must, as it seems to us, rest upon three or four finely conceived and admirably executed portraits. We do not allude to his

Indian characters, which, it must be granted, are for the most part either superficially or falsely drawn; while the long conversations which he puts into their mouths are as truthless as they are tiresome. Such as they are, however, they have been eagerly copied by a legion of the smaller poets and novel writers; so that, jointly with Thomas Campbell, Cooper is responsible for the fathering of those aboriginal heroes, lovers, and sages, who have long formed a petty nuisance in our literature. The portraits of which we have spoken are all those of white men, from humble ranks of society, yet not of a mean or vulgar stamp. Conspicuous before them all stands the well-known figure of Leatherstocking. The life and character of this personage are contained in a series of five independent novels, entitled, in honor of him, the "Leatherstocking Tales." Cooper has been censured, and even ridiculed, for this frequent reproduction of his favorite hero, which, it is affirmed, argues poverty of invention; and yet there is not one of the tales in question with which we would willingly part. To have drawn such a character is in itself sufficient honor; and, had Cooper achieved nothing else, this alone must have insured him a wide and merited renown. There is something admirably felicitous in the conception of this hybrid offspring of civilization and barbarism, in whom uprightness, kindness, innate philosophy, and the truest moral perceptions are joined with the wandering instincts and the hatred of restraints which stamp the Indian or the Bedouin. Nor is the character in the least unnatural. The white denizens of the forest and the prairie are often among the worst though never among the meanest of mankind; but it is equally true that where the moral instincts are originally

strong, they may find nutriment and growth among the rude scenes and grand associations of the wilderness. Men as true, generous, and kindly as Leatherstocking may still be found among the perilous solitudes of the West. The quiet, unostentatious courage of Cooper's hero had its counterpart in the character of Daniel Boone; and the latter had the same unaffected love of nature which forms so pleasing a feature in the mind of Leatherstocking.

Civilization has a destroying as well as a creating power. It is exterminating the buffalo and the Indian, over whose fate too many lamentations, real or affected, have been sounded for us to renew them here. It must, moreover, sweep from before it a class of men, its own precursors and pioneers, so remarkable both in their virtues and their faults, that few will see their extinction without regret. Of these men Leatherstocking is the representative; and though in him the traits of the individual are quite as prominent as those of the class, yet his character is not on this account less interesting, or less worthy of permanent remembrance. His life conveys in some sort an epitome of American history, during one of its most busy and decisive periods. At first we find him a lonely young hunter in what was then the wilderness of New York. Ten or twelve years later he is playing his part manfully in the old French war. After the close of the Revolution, we meet him again on the same spot where he was first introduced to us; but now everything is changed. The solitary margin of the Otsego Lake is transformed into the seat of a growing settlement, and the hunter, oppressed by the restraints of society, turns his aged footsteps westward in search of his congenial solitude. At length we discover him, for the last time, an octogenarian

trapper, far out on the prairies of the West. It is clear that the successive stages of his retreat from society could not well be presented in a single story, and that the repetition which has been charged against Cooper as a fault was indispensable to the development of his design.

"The Deerslayer," the first novel in the series of Leatherstocking Tales, seems to us one of the most interesting of Cooper's productions. He has chosen for the scene of his story the Otsego Lake, on whose banks he lived and died, and whose scenery he has introduced into three, if not more, of his novels. The Deerslayer, or Leatherstocking, here makes his first appearance as a young man, in fact scarcely emerged from boyhood, yet with all the simplicity, candor, feeling, and penetration which mark his riper years. The old buccaneer in his aquatic habitation, and the contrasted characters of his two daughters, add a human interest to the scene, for the want of which the highest skill in mere landscape painting can not compensate. The character of Judith seems to us the best drawn, and by far the most interesting, female portrait in any of Cooper's novels with which we are acquainted. The story, however, is not free from the characteristic faults of its author. Above all, it contains, in one instance at least, a glaring exhibition of his aptitude for describing horrors. When he compels his marvelously graphic pen to depict scenes which would disgrace the shambles or the dissecting-table, none can wonder that ladies and young clergymen regard his pages with abhorrence. These, however, are but casual defects in a work which bears the unmistakable impress of genius.

"The Pathfinder" forms the second volume of the series, and is remarkable, even among its companions, for

the force and distinctness of its pictures. For ourselves—though we diligently perused the dispatches—the battle of Palo Alto and the storming of Monterey are not more real and present to our mind than some of the scenes and characters of “*The Pathfinder*,” though we have not read it for nine years—the little fort on the margin of Lake Ontario, the surrounding woods and waters, the veteran major in command, the treacherous Scotchman, the dogmatic old sailor, and the Pathfinder himself. Several of these scenes are borrowed in part from Mrs. Grant’s “*Memoirs of an American Lady*”; but, in borrowing, Cooper has transmuted shadows into substance. Mrs. Grant’s facts—for as such we are to take them—have an air of fiction; while Cooper’s fiction wears the aspect of solid fact. His peculiar powers could not be better illustrated than by a comparison of the passages alluded to in the two books.

One of the most widely known of Cooper’s novels is “*The Last of the Mohicans*,” which forms the third volume of the series, and which, with all the elements of a vulgar popularity, combines excellences of a far higher order. It has, nevertheless, its great and obtrusive faults. It takes needless liberties with history; and, though it would be folly to demand that an historical novelist should always conform to received authorities, yet it is certainly desirable that he should not unnecessarily set them at defiance; since the incidents of the novel are apt to remain longer in the memory than those of the less palatable history. But whatever may be the extent of the novelist’s license, it is at all events essential that his story should have some semblance of probability, and not run counter to nature and common sense. In “*The Last of the Mohicans*” the machinery of

the plot falls little short of absurdity. Why a veteran officer, pent up in a little fort, and hourly expecting to be beleaguered by a vastly superior force, consisting in great part of bloodthirsty savages, should at that particular time desire or permit a visit from his two daughters, is a question not easy to answer. Nor is the difficulty lessened when it is remembered that the young ladies are to make the journey through a wilderness full of Indian scalping-parties. It is equally difficult to see why the lover of Alice should choose, merely for the sake of a romantic ride, to conduct her and her sister by a circuitous and most perilous by-path through the forests, when they might more easily have gone by a good road under the safe escort of a column of troops who marched for the fort that very morning. The story founded on these gross inventions is sustained by various minor improbabilities, which can not escape the reader unless his attention is absorbed by the powerful interest of the narrative.

It seems to us a defect in a novel or a poem when the heroine is compelled to undergo bodily hardship, to sleep out at night in the woods, drenched by rain, stung by mosquitoes, and scratched by briars—to forego all appliances of the toilet, and above all, to lodge in an Indian wigwam. Women have sometimes endured such privation, and endured it with fortitude; but it may be safely affirmed that, for the time, all grace and romance were banished from their presence. We read Longfellow's "Evangeline" with much sympathy in the fortunes of the errant heroine, until, as we approached the end of the poem, every other sentiment was lost in admiration of the unparalleled extent of her wanderings, at the dexterity with which she contrived to elude at

least a dozen tribes of savages at that time in a state of war, at the strength of her constitution, and at her marvelous proficiency in woodcraft. When, however, we had followed her for about two thousand miles on her forest pilgrimage, and reflected on the figure she must have made, so tattered and bepatched, bedrenched and bedraggled, we could not but esteem it a happy circumstance that she failed, as she did, to meet her lover; since, had he seen her in such plight, every spark of sentiment must have vanished from his breast, and all the romance of the poem been ingloriously extinguished. With Cooper's heroines, Cora and Alice, the case is not so hard. Yet, as it does not appear that, on a journey of several weeks, they were permitted to carry so much as a valise or a carpet-bag, and as we are expressly told that, on several occasions, they dropped by the wayside their gloves, veils, and other useful articles of apparel, it is certain that at the journey's end they must have presented an appearance more calculated to call forth a Christian sympathy than any emotion of a more romantic nature.

In respect to the delineation of character, "The Last of the Mohicans" is surpassed by several other works of the author. Its distinguishing merit lies in its descriptions of scenery and action. Of the personages who figure in it, one of the most interesting is the young Mohican, Uncas, who, however, does not at all resemble a genuine Indian. Magua, the villain of the story, is a less untruthful portrait. Cooper has been criticised for representing him as falling in love with Cora; and the criticism is based on the alleged ground that passions of this kind are not characteristic of the Indian. This may, in some qualified sense, be true; but it is well known that Indians, in real life as well as in novels,

display a peculiar partiality for white women, on the same principle by which Italians are prone to admire a light complexion, while the Swedes regard a brunette with highest esteem. Cora was the very person to fascinate an Indian. The coldest warrior would gladly have received her into his lodge, and promoted her to be his favorite wife, wholly dispensing, in honor of her charms, with flagellation or any of the severer marks of conjugal displeasure.

The character of Hawkeye or Leatherstocking is, in "The Last of the Mohicans" as elsewhere, clearly and admirably drawn. He often displays, however, a weakness which excites the impatience of the reader—an excessive and ill-timed loquacity. When, for example, in the fight at Glenn's Falls, he and Major Heywood are crouching in the thicket, watching the motions of four Indians, whose heads are visible above a log at a little distance, and who, in the expression of Hawkeye himself, are gathering for a rush, the scout employs the time in dilating upon the properties of the "long-barreled, soft-metaled rifle." The design is, no doubt, to convey an impression of his coolness in moments of extreme danger; but, under such circumstances, the bravest man would judge it the part of good sense to use his eyes rather than his tongue. Men of Hawkeye's class, however talkative they may be at the camp-fire, are remarkable for preserving a close silence while engaged in the active labors of their calling.

It is easy to find fault with "The Last of the Mohicans," but it is far from easy to rival or even approach its excellences. The book has the genuine game flavor; it exhales the odors of the pine-woods and the freshness of the mountain wind. Its dark and rugged scenery rises as distinctly

on the eye as the images of the painter's canvas, or rather as the reflection of Nature herself. But it is not as the mere rendering of material forms that these wood-paintings are most highly to be esteemed ; they breathe the somber poetry of solitude and danger. In these achievements of his art, Cooper, we think, has no equal, unless it may be the author of that striking romance, "Wacousta; or, The Prophecy," whose fine powers of imagination are, however, even less under the guidance of a just taste than those of the American novelist.

The most obvious merit of "The Last of the Mohicans" consists in its descriptions of action, in the power with which the author absorbs the reader's sympathies, and leads him, as it were, to play a part in the scene. One reads the accounts of a great battle—aside from any cause or principle at issue—with the same kind of interest with which he beholds the grand destructive phenomena of nature, a tempest at sea, or a tornado in the tropics ; yet with a feeling far more intense, since the conflict is not a mere striving of insensate elements, but of living tides of human wrath and valor. With descriptions of petty skirmishes or single combats the feeling is of a different kind. The reader is enlisted in the fray—a partaker, as it were, in every thought and movement of the combatants, in the alternations of fear and triumph, the prompt expedient, the desperate resort, the palpitations of human weakness, or the courage that faces death. Of this species of description, the scene of the conflict at Glenn's Falls is an admirable example, unsurpassed, we think, even by the combat of Balfour and Bothwell, or by any other passage of the kind in the novels of Scott. The scenery of the fight, the foaming cataract, the little islet

with its stout-hearted defenders, the precipices and the dark pine-woods, add greatly to the effect. The scene is conjured before the reader's eye, not as a vision or a picture, but like the tangible presence of rock, river, and forest. His very senses seem conspiring to deceive him. He seems to feel against his cheek the wind and spray of the cataract, and hear its sullen roar, amid the yells of the assailants and the sharp crack of the answering rifle. The scene of the strife is pointed out to travelers as if this fictitious combat were a real event of history. Mills, factories, and bridges have marred the native wildness of the spot, and a village has usurped the domain of the forest; yet still those foaming waters and black sheets of limestone rock are clothed with all the interest of an historic memory; and the cicerone of the place can show the caves where the affrighted sisters took refuge, the point where the Indians landed, and the rock whence the despairing Huron was flung into the abyss. Nay, if the lapse of a few years has not enlightened his understanding, the guide would as soon doubt the reality of the battle of Saratoga as that of Hawkeye's fight with the Mingoes.

"The Pioneers," the fourth volume of the series, is, in several respects, the best of Cooper's works. Unlike some of its companions, it bears every mark of having been written from the results of personal experience; and, indeed, Cooper is well known to have drawn largely on the recollections of his earlier years in the composition of this novel. The characters are full of vitality and truth, though, in one or two instances, the excellence of the delineation is impaired by a certain taint of vulgarity. Leatherstocking, as he appears in "The Pioneers," must certainly have had his

living original in some gaunt, gray-haired old woodsman, to whose stories of hunts and Indian fights the author may perhaps have listened in his boyhood with rapt ears, unconsciously garnering up in memory the germs which time was to develop into a rich harvest. The scenes of the Christmas turkey-shooting, the fish-spearing by firelight on Otsego Lake, the rescue from the panther, and the burning of the woods, are all inimitable in their way. Of all Cooper's works, "The Pioneers" seems to us most likely to hold a permanent place in literature, for it preserves a vivid reflection of scenes and characters which will soon have passed away.

"The Prairie," the last of the "Leatherstocking Tales," is a novel of far inferior merit. The story is very improbable, and not very interesting. The pictures of scenery are less true to nature than in the previous volumes, and seem to indicate that Cooper had little or no personal acquaintance with the remoter parts of the West. The book, however, has several passages of much interest, one of the best of which is the scene in which the aged trapper discovers, in the person of a young officer, the grandson of Duncan Heywood and Alice Munro, whom, half a century before, he had protected in such imminent jeopardy on the rocks of Glenn's Falls and among the mountains of Lake George. The death of Abiram White is very striking, though reminding one of a similar scene in "The Spy." The grand deformity in the story is the wretched attempt at humor in the person of Dr. Obed Battius. David Gamut, in "The Mohicans," is bad enough; but Battius out-Herods Herod, and great must be the merit of the book which one such incubus would not sink beyond redemption.

The novel which first brought the name of Cooper into distinguished notice was "The Spy"; and this book, which gave him his earliest reputation, will contribute largely to preserve it. The story is full of interest, and the character of Harvey Birch is drawn with singular skill.

"The Pilot" is usually considered the best of Cooper's sea-tales. It is in truth a masterpiece of his genius; and although the reader is apt to pass with impatience over the long conversations among the ladies at Saint Ruth's, and between Alice Dunscombe and the disguised Paul Jones, yet he is amply repaid when he follows the author to his congenial element. The description of the wreck of the Ariel, and the death of Long Tom Coffin, can scarcely be spoken of in terms of too much admiration. Long Tom is to Cooper's sea-tales what Leatherstocking is to the novels of the forest—a conception so original and forcible that posterity will hardly suffer it to escape from remembrance. "The Red Rover," "The Water-Witch," and the remainder of the sea-tales, are marked with the same excellences and defects with the novels already mentioned, and further comments would therefore be useless.

The recent death of the man who had achieved so much in the cause of American literature has called forth, as it should have done, a general expression of regret; and the outcries, not unprovoked, which of late have been raised against him, are drowned in the voice of sorrow. The most marked and original of American writers has passed from among us. It was an auspicious moment when his earlier works first saw the light; for there was promise in their rude vigor—a good hope that from such rough beginnings the country might develop a literary progeny which, taking les-

sons in the graces, and refining with the lapse of years, might one day do honor to its parentage; and when the chastened genius of Bryant arose it seemed that the fulfillment of such a hope was not far remote. But this fair promise has failed, and to this hour the purpose, the energy, the passion of America have never found their adequate expression on the printed page. The number of good writers truly American, by which we mean all those who are not imitators of foreign modes, might be counted on the fingers of the two hands; nor are the writers of this small class, not excepting even Bryant himself, in any eminent degree the favorites of those among their countrymen who make pretensions to taste and refinement. As in life and manners the American people seem bent on aping the polished luxury of another hemisphere, so likewise they reserve their enthusiasm and their purses for the honeyed verse and sugared prose of an emasculate and supposititious literature.

Some French writer—Chateaubriand, we believe—observes that the only portion of the American people who exhibit any distinctive national character are the backwoodsmen of the West. The remark is not strictly true. The whole merchant marine, from captains to cabin-boys, the lumbermen of Maine, the farmers of New England, and indeed all the laboring population of the country, not of foreign origin, are marked with strong and peculiar traits. But when we ascend into the educated and polished classes these peculiarities are smoothed away, until, in many cases, they are invisible. An educated Englishman is an Englishman still; an educated Frenchman is often intensely French; but an educated American is apt to have no national character at all. The condition of the literature of the country

is, as might be expected, in close accordance with these peculiarities of its society. With but few exceptions, the only books which reflect the national mind are those which emanate from, or are adapted to, the unschooled classes of the people—such, for example, as Dr. Bird's "Nick of the Woods," "The Life of David Crockett," "The Big Bear of Arkansas," with its kindred legends, and, we may add, the earlier novels of Cooper. In the politer walks of literature we find much grace of style, but very little originality of thought—productions which might as readily be taken for the work of an Englishman as of an American.

This lack of originality has been loudly complained of, but it seems to us inevitable under the circumstances. The healthful growth of the intellect, whether national or individual, like healthful growth of every other kind, must proceed from the action of internal energies, not from foreign aid. Too much assistance, too many stimulants, weaken instead of increasing it. The cravings of the American mind, eager as they are, are amply supplied by the copious stream of English current literature. Thousands, nay, millions of readers and writers drink from this bounteous source, and feed on this foreign aliment, till the whole complexion of their thoughts is tinged with it, and by a sort of necessity they think and write at second hand. If this transatlantic supply were completely cut off, and the nation abandoned to its own resources, it would eventually promote, in a high degree, the development of the national intellect. The vitality and force, which are abundantly displayed in every department of active life, would soon find their way into a higher channel, to meet the new and clamorous necessity for mental food; and, in the space of a generation,

the oft-repeated demand for an original literature would be fully satisfied.

In respect to every department of active life, the United States are fully emancipated from their ancient colonial subjection. They can plan, invent, and achieve for themselves, and this, too, with a commanding success. But in all the finer functions of thought, in all matters of literature and taste, we are essentially provincial. England once held us in a state of political dependency. That day is past; but she still holds us in an intellectual dependency far more complete. Her thoughts become our thoughts, by a process unconscious but inevitable. She caters for our mind and fancy with a liberal hand. We are spared the labor of self-support; but by the universal law, applicable to nations no less than to individuals, we are weakened by the want of independent exercise. It is a matter of common remark that the most highly educated classes among us are far from being the most efficient either in thought or action. The vigorous life of the nation springs from the deep rich soil at the bottom of society. Its men of greatest influence are those who have studied men before they studied books, and who, by hard battling with the world, and boldly following out the bent of their native genius, have hewed their own way to wealth, station, or knowledge from the plowshare or the forecastle. The comparative shortcomings of the best educated among us may be traced to several causes; but, as we are constrained to think, they are mainly owing to the fact that the highest civilization of America is communicated from without instead of being developed from within, and is therefore nerveless and unproductive.

SHAKESPEARE ONCE MORE.

MANY years ago, while yet Fancy claimed that right in me which Fact has since, to my no small loss, so successfully disputed, I pleased myself with imagining the play of "Hamlet" published under some *alias*, and as the work of a new candidate in literature. Then I *played*, as the children say, that it came in regular course before some well-meaning doer of criticisms, who had never read the original (no very wild assumption, as things go), and endeavored to conceive the kind of way in which he would be likely to take it. I put myself in his place, and tried to write such a perfunctory notice as I thought would be likely, in filling his column, to satisfy his conscience. But it was a *tour de force* quite beyond my power to execute without grimace. I could not arrive at that artistic absorption in my own conception which would enable me to be natural, and found myself, like a bad actor, continually betraying my self-consciousness by my very endeavor to hide it under caricature. The path of nature is indeed a narrow one, and it is only the immortals that seek it, and, when they find it, do not find themselves cramped therein. My result was a dead failure—satire instead of comedy. I could not shake off that strange

accumulation which we call self, and report honestly what I saw and felt even to myself, much less to others.

Yet I have often thought that, unless we can so far free ourselves from our own prepossessions as to be capable of bringing to a work of art some freshness of sensation, and receiving from it in turn some new surprise of sympathy and admiration—some shock even, it may be, of instinctive distaste and repulsion—though we may praise or blame, weighing our *pros* and *cons* in the nicest balances, sealed by proper authority, yet we shall not criticise in the highest sense. On the other hand, unless we admit certain principles as fixed beyond question, we shall be able to render no adequate judgment, but only to record our impressions, which may be valuable or not, according to the greater or less ductility of the senses on which they are made. Charles Lamb, for example, came to the old English dramatists with the feeling of a discoverer. He brought with him an alert curiosity, and everything was delightful simply because it was strange. Like other early adventurers, he sometimes mistakes shining sand for gold; but he had the great advantage of not feeling himself responsible for the manners of the inhabitants he found there, and not thinking it needful to make them square with any Westminster Catechism of æsthetics. Best of all, he does not feel compelled to compare them with the Greeks, about whom he knew little, and cared less. He takes them as he finds them, describes them in a few pregnant sentences, and displays his specimens of their growth and manufacture. When he arrives at the dramatists of the Restoration, so far from being shocked, he is charmed with their pretty and unmoral ways; and what he says of them reminds us of blunt Captain Dampier,

who, in his account of the island of Timor, remarks as a matter of no consequence that the natives "take as many wives as they can maintain, and as for religion they have none."

Lamb had the great advantage of seeing the elder dramatists as they were; it did not lie within his province to point out what they were not. Himself a fragmentary writer, he had more sympathy with imagination where it gathers into the intense focus of passionate phrase than with that higher form of it where it is the faculty that shapes, gives unity of design, and balanced gravitation of parts. And yet it is only this higher form of it which can unimpeachably assure to any work the dignity and permanence of a classic; for it results in that exquisite something called style, which, like the grace of perfect breeding, everywhere pervasive and nowhere emphatic, makes itself felt by the skill with which it effaces itself, and masters us at last with a sense of indefinable completeness. On a lower plane we may detect it in the structure of a sentence, in the limpid expression that implies sincerity of thought; but it is only where it combines and organizes, where it eludes observation in particulars to give the rarer delight of perfection as a whole, that it belongs to art. Then it is truly ideal, the *forma mentis æterna*, not as a passive mold into which the thought is poured, but as the conceptive energy which finds all material plastic to its preconceived design. Mere vividness of expression, such as makes quotable passages, comes of the complete surrender of self to the impression, whether spiritual or sensual, of the moment. It is a quality, perhaps, in which the young poet is richer than the mature, his very inexperience making him more venturesome in those leaps

of language that startle us with their rashness only to bewitch us the more with the happy ease of their accomplishment. For this there are no existing laws of rhetoric, for it is from such felicities that the rhetoricians deduce and codify their statutes. It is something which can not be improved upon or cultivated, for it is immediate and intuitive. But this power of expression is subsidiary, and goes only a little way toward the making of a great poet. Imagination, where it is truly creative, is a faculty, and not a quality; it looks before and after, it gives the form that makes all the parts work together harmoniously toward a given end, its seat is in the higher reason, and it is efficient only as a servant of the will. Imagination, as it is too often misunderstood, is mere phantasy, the image-making power, common to all who have the gift of dreams, or who can afford to buy it in a vulgar drug as De Quincey bought it.

The true poetic imagination is of one quality, whether it be ancient or modern, and equally subject to those laws of grace, of proportion, of design, in whose free service, and in that alone, it can become art. Those laws are something which do not

“ . . . alter when they alteration find,
And bend with the remover to remove.”

And they are more clearly to be deduced from the eminent examples of Greek literature than from any other source. It is the advantage of this select company of ancients that their works are defecated of all turbid mixture of contemporaneousness, and have become to us pure *literature*, our judgment and enjoyment of which can not be vulgarized by any prejudices of time or place. This is why the study of

them is fitly called a liberal education, because it emancipates the mind from every narrow provincialism whether of egoism or tradition, and is the apprenticeship that every one must serve before becoming a free brother of the guild which passes the torch of life from age to age. There would be no dispute about the advantages of that Greek culture which Schiller advocated with such generous eloquence, if the great authors of antiquity had not been degraded from teachers of thinking to drillers in grammar, and made the ruthless pedagogues of root and inflection, instead of companions for whose society the mind must put on her highest mood. The discouraged youth too naturally transfers the epithet of *dead* from the languages to the authors that wrote in them. What concern have we with the shades of dialect in Homer or Theocritus, provided they speak the spiritual *lingua franca* that abolishes all alienage of race, and makes whatever shore of time we land on hospitable and homelike? There is much that is deciduous in books, but all that gives them a title to rank as literature in the highest sense is perennial. Their vitality is the vitality not of one or another blood or tongue, but of human nature; their truth is not topical and transitory, but of universal acceptance; and thus all great authors seem the coevals not only of each other, but of whoever reads them, growing wiser with him as he grows wise, and unlocking to him one secret after another as his own life and experience give him the key, but on no other condition. Their meaning is absolute, not conditional; it is a property of *theirs*, quite irrespective of manners or creed; for the highest culture, the development of the individual by observation, reflection, and study, leads to one result, whether in

Athens or in London. The more we know of ancient literature, the more we are struck with its modernness, just as the more we study the maturer dramas of Shakespeare, the more we feel his nearness in certain primary qualities to the antique and classical. Yet even in saying this I tacitly make the admission that it is the Greeks who must furnish us with our standard of comparison. Their stamp is upon all the allowed measures and weights of æsthetic criticism. Nor does a consciousness of this, nor a constant reference to it, in any sense reduce us to the mere copying of a by-gone excellence; for it is the test of excellence in any department of art that it can never be bygone, and it is not mere difference from antique models, but the *way* in which that difference is shown, the direction it takes, that we are to consider in our judgment of a modern work. The model is not there to be copied merely, but that the study of it may lead us insensibly to the same processes of thought by which its purity of outline and harmony of parts were attained, and enable us to feel that strength is consistent with repose, that multiplicity is not abundance, that grace is but a more refined form of power, and that a thought is none the less profound that the limpidity of its expression allows us to measure it at a glance. To be possessed with this conviction gives us at least a determinate point of view, and enables us to appeal a case of taste to a court of final judicature, whose decisions are guided by immutable principles. When we hear of certain productions that they are feeble in design, but masterly in parts, that they are incoherent, to be sure, but have great merits of style, we know that it can not be true; for, in the highest examples we have, the master is revealed by his plan, by his power of

making all accessories, each in its due relation, subordinate to it, and that to limit style to the rounding of a period or a distich is wholly to misapprehend its truest and highest function. Donne is full of salient verses that would take the rudest March winds of criticism with their beauty, of thoughts that first tease us like charades and then delight us with the felicity of their solution; but these have not saved him. He is exiled to the limbo of the formless and the fragmentary. To take a more recent instance: Wordsworth had, in some respects, a deeper insight, and a more adequate utterance of it, than any man of his generation. But it was a piecemeal insight and utterance; his imagination was feminine, not masculine, receptive, and not creative. His longer poems are Egyptian sand-wastes, with here and there an oasis of exquisite scenery, a grand image, Sphinx-like, half buried in drifting commonplaces, or the solitary Pompey's Pillar of some towering thought. But what is the fate of a poet who owns the quarry, but can not build the poem? Ere the century is out he will be nine parts dead, and immortal only in that tenth part of him which is included in a thin volume of "beauties." Already Moxon has felt the need of extracting this essential oil of him; and his memory will be kept alive, if at all, by the precious material rather than the workmanship of the vase that contains his heart. And what shall we forebode of so many modern poems, full of splendid passages, beginning everywhere and leading nowhere, reminding us of nothing so much as the amateur architect who planned his own house, and forgot the staircase that should connect one floor with another, putting it as an afterthought on the outside?

Lichtenberg says somewhere that it was the advantage

of the ancients to write before the great art of writing ill had been invented; and Shakespeare may be said to have had the good luck of coming after Spenser (to whom the debt of English poetry is incalculable) had reinvented the art of writing well. But Shakespeare arrived at a mastery in this respect which sets him above all other poets. He is not only superior in degree, but he is also different in kind. In that less purely artistic sphere of style which concerns the matter rather than the form his charm is often unspeakable. How perfect his style is may be judged from the fact that it never curdles into mannerism, and thus absolutely eludes imitation. Though here, if anywhere, the style is the man, yet it is noticeable only, like the images of Brutus, by its absence, so thoroughly is he absorbed in his work, while he fuses thought and word indissolubly together, till all the particles cohere by the best virtue of each. With perfect truth he has said of himself that he writes

“ . . . all one, ever the same,
Putting invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell his name.”

And yet who has so succeeded in imitating him as to remind us of him by even so much as the gait of a single verse? Those magnificent crystallizations of feeling and phrase, basaltic masses, molten and interfused by the primal fires of passion, are not to be reproduced by the slow experiments of the laboratory striving to parody creation with artifice. Mr. Matthew Arnold seems to think that Shakespeare has damaged English poetry. I wish he had! It is true he lifted Dryden above himself in “All for Love”; but it was Dryden who said of him, by instinctive conviction rather

than judgment, that within his magic circle none dare tread but he. Is he to blame for the extravagances of modern diction, which are but the reaction of the brazen age against the degeneracy of art into artifice, that has characterized the silver period in every literature? The quality in him which makes him at once so thoroughly English and so thoroughly cosmopolitan is that aëration of the understanding by the imagination which he has in common with all the greater poets, and which is the privilege of genius. The modern school, which mistakes violence for intensity, seems to catch its breath when it finds itself on the verge of natural expression, and to say to itself, "Good Heavens! I had almost forgotten I was inspired!" But of Shakespeare we do not even suspect that he ever remembered it. He does not always speak in that intense way that flames up in "*Lear*" and "*Macbeth*" through the rifts of a soil volcanic with passion. He allows us here and there the repose of a commonplace character, the consoling distraction of a humorous one. He knows how to be equable and grand without effort, so that we forget the altitude of thought to which he has led us, because the slowly receding slope of a mountain stretching downward by ample gradations gives a less startling impression of height than to look over the edge of a ravine that makes but a wrinkle in its flank.

Shakespeare has been sometimes taxed with the barbarism of profuseness and exaggeration. But this is to measure him by a Sophoclean scale. The simplicity of the antique tragedy is by no means that of expression, but is of form merely. In the utterance of great passions, something must be indulged to the extravagance of nature; the subdued tones to which pathos and sentiment are limited can not ex-

press a tempest of the soul. The range between the piteous "no more but so," in which Ophelia compresses the heart-break whose compression was to make her mad, and that sublime appeal of Lear to the elements of nature, only to be matched, if matched at all, in the "Prometheus," is a wide one, and Shakespeare is as truly simple in the one as in the other. The simplicity of poetry is not that of prose, nor its clearness that of ready apprehension merely. To a subtle sense, a sense heightened by sympathy, those sudden fervors of phrase, gone ere one can say it lightens, that show us Macbeth groping among the perplexities of thought in his conscience-clouded mind, and reveal the intricacy rather than enlighten it, while they leave the eye darkened to the literal meaning of the words, yet make their logical sequence, the grandeur of the conception, and its truth to nature clearer than sober daylight could. There is an obscurity of mist rising from the undrained shallows of the mind, and there is the darkness of thunder-cloud gathering its electric masses with passionate intensity from the clear element of the imagination, not at random or willfully, but by the natural processes of the creative faculty, to brood those flashes of expression that transcend rhetoric, and are only to be apprehended by the poetic instinct.

In that secondary office of imagination, where it serves the artist, not as the reason that shapes, but as the interpreter of his conceptions into words, there is a distinction to be noticed between the higher and lower mode in which it performs its function. It may be either creative or pictorial, may body forth the thought or merely image it forth. With Shakespeare, for example, imagination seems immanent in his very consciousness; with Milton, in his memory. In

the one it sends, as if without knowing it, a fiery life into the verse—

“Sei die Braut das Wort,
Bräutigam der Geist”;

in the other it elaborates a certain pomp and elevation. Accordingly, the bias of the former is toward over-intensity, of the latter toward over-diffusiveness. Shakespeare's temptation is to push a willing metaphor beyond its strength, to make a passion over-inform its tenement of words; Milton can not resist running a simile on into a fugue. One always fancies Shakespeare *in* his best verses, and Milton at the key-board of his organ. Shakespeare's language is no longer the mere vehicle of thought, it has become part of it, its very flesh and blood. The pleasure it gives us is unmixed, direct, like that from the smell of a flower or the flavor of a fruit. Milton sets everywhere his little pitfalls of bookish association for the memory. I know that Milton's manner is very grand. It is slow, it is stately, moving as in triumphal procession, with music, with historic banners, with spoils from every time and every region, and captive epithets, like huge Sicambrians, thrust their broad shoulders between us and the thought whose pomp they decorate. But it is manner, nevertheless, as is proved by the ease with which it is parodied, by the danger it is in of degenerating into mannerism whenever it forgets itself. Fancy a parody of Shakespeare—I do not mean of his words, but of his *tone*, for that is what distinguishes the master. You might as well try it with the Venus of Milo. In Shakespeare it is always the higher thing, the thought, the fancy, that is preëminent; it is Cæsar that draws all eyes, and not

the chariot in which he rides, or the throng which is but the reverberation of his supremacy. If not, how explain the charm with which he dominates in all tongues, even under the disenchantment of translation? Among the most alien races he is as solidly at home as a mountain seen from different sides by many lands, itself superbly solitary, yet the companion of all thoughts and domesticated in all imaginations.

In description Shakespeare is especially great, and in that instinct which gives the peculiar quality of any object of contemplation in a single happy word that colors the impression on the sense with the mood of the mind. Most descriptive poets seem to think that a hogshead of water caught at the spout will give us a livelier notion of a thunder-shower than the sullen muttering of the first big drops upon the roof. They forget that it is by suggestion, not cumulation, that profound impressions are made upon the imagination. Milton's parsimony (so rare in him) makes the success of his

"Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin."

Shakespeare understood perfectly the charm of indirectness, of making his readers seem to discover for themselves what he means to show them. If he wishes to tell that the leaves of the willow are gray on the under side, he does not make it a mere fact of observation by bluntly saying so, but makes it picturesquely reveal itself to us as it might in nature :

"There is a willow grows athwart the flood,
That shows his *hoar* leaves in the glassy stream."

Where he goes to the landscape for a comparison, he does not ransack wood and field for specialties, as if he were gathering simples, but takes one image, obvious, familiar, and makes it new to us either by sympathy or contrast with his own immediate feeling. He always looked upon nature with the eyes of the mind. Thus he can make the melancholy of autumn or the gladness of spring alike pathetic :

“That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves or few, or none, do hang
Upon those boughs that shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.”

Or again :

“From thee have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn leaped and laughed with him.”

But as dramatic poet, Shakespeare goes even beyond this, entering so perfectly into the consciousness of the characters he himself has created, that he sees everything through their peculiar mood, and makes every epithet, as if unconsciously, echo and reëcho it. Theseus asks Hermia—

“Can you endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,
To live a *barren* sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the *cold fruitless* moon ?”

When Romeo must leave Juliet, the private pang of the lovers becomes a property of Nature herself, and

“ . . . *envious* streaks
Do lace the *severing* clouds in yonder east.”

But even more striking is the following instance from "Macbeth":

". . . the raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under your battlements."

Here Shakespeare, with his wonted tact, makes use of a vulgar superstition, of a type in which mortal presentiment is already embodied, to make a common ground on which the hearer and Lady Macbeth may meet. After this prelude we are prepared to be possessed by her emotion more fully, to feel in her ears the dull tramp of the blood that seems to make the raven's croak yet hoarser than it is, and to betray the stealthy advance of the mind to its fell purpose. For Lady Macbeth hears not so much the voice of the bodeful bird as of her own premeditated murder, and we are thus made her shuddering accomplices before the fact. Every image receives the color of the mind, every word throbs with the pulse of one controlling passion. The epithet *fatal* makes us feel the implacable resolve of the speaker, and shows us that she is tampering with her conscience by putting off the crime upon the prophecy of the Weird Sisters to which she alludes. In the word *battlements*, too, not only is the fancy led up to the perch of the raven, but a hostile image takes the place of a hospitable; for men commonly speak of receiving a guest under their roof or within their doors. That this is not over-ingenuity, seeing what is not to be seen, nor meant to be seen, is clear to me from what follows. When Duncan and Banquo arrive at the castle, their fancies, free from all suggestion of evil, call up only gracious and amiable images. The raven was but

the fantastical creation of Lady Macbeth's overwrought brain :

"This castle has a pleasant seat, the air
Nimbly and sweetly doth commend itself
Unto our gentle senses.

This *guest* of summer,
The *temple-haunting* martlet, doth approve
By his *loved mansionry* that the heaven's breath
Smells *wooingly* here ; no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, or coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle."

The contrast here can not but be as intentional as it is marked. Every image is one of welcome, security, and confidence. The summer, one may well fancy, would be a very different hostess from her whom we have just seen expecting *them*. And why *temple-haunting*, unless because it suggests sanctuary? *O immaginativa, che si ne rubi delle cose di fuor*, how infinitely more precious are the inward ones thou givest in return ! If all this be accident, it is at least one of those accidents of which only this man was ever capable. I divine something like it now and then in Æschylus, through the mists of a language which will not let me be sure of what I see, but nowhere else. Shakespeare, it is true, had, as respects English, the privilege which only first-comers enjoy. The language was still fresh from those sources at too great a distance from which it becomes fit only for the service of prose. Wherever he dipped, it came up clear and sparkling, undefiled as yet by the drainage of literary factories, or of those dye-houses where the machine-woven fabrics of sham culture are colored up to the last desperate style of sham sentiment. Those who criticise his diction as

sometimes extravagant should remember that in poetry language is something more than merely the vehicle of thought, that it is meant to convey the sentiment as much as the sense, and that, if there is a beauty of use, there is often a higher use of beauty.

What kind of culture Shakespeare had is uncertain; how much he had is disputed; that he had as much as he wanted, and of whatever kind he wanted, must be clear to whoever considers the question. Dr. Farmer has proved, in his entertaining essay, that he got everything at second hand from translations, and that, where his translator blundered, he loyally blundered too. But Goethe, the man of widest acquirement in modern times, did precisely the same thing. In his character of poet he set as little store by useless learning as Shakespeare did. He learned to write hexameters, not from Homer, but from Voss, and Voss found them faulty; yet somehow "*Hermann und Dorothea*" is more readable than "*Luise*." So far as all the classicism then attainable was concerned, Shakespeare got it as cheap as Goethe did, who always bought it ready-made. For such purposes of mere æsthetic nourishment Goethe always milked other minds—if minds those ruminators and digesters of antiquity into asses' milk may be called. There were plenty of professors who were for ever assiduously browsing in vales of Enna and on Pentelican slopes among the vestiges of antiquity, slowly secreting lacteous facts, and not one of them would have raised his head from that exquisite pasturage, though Pan had made music through his pipe of reeds. Did Goethe wish to work up a Greek theme? He drove out Herr Böttiger, for example, among that fodder delicious to him for its very dryness, that sapless Arcadia of

scholiasts, let him graze, ruminate, and go through all other needful processes of the antiquarian organism, then got him quietly into a corner and milked him. The product, after standing long enough, mantled over with the rich Goethean cream, from which a butter could be churned, if not precisely classic, quite as good as the ancients could have made out of the same material. But who has ever read the "Achilleis," correct in all *un*essential particulars as it probably is?

It is impossible to conceive that a man who in other respects made such booty of the world around him, whose observation of manners was so minute, and whose insight into character and motives, as if he had been one of God's spies, was so unerring that we accept it without question, as we do Nature herself, and find it more consoling to explain his confessedly immense superiority by attributing it to a happy instinct rather than to the conscientious perfecting of exceptional powers till practice made them seem to work independently of the will which still directed them—it is impossible that such a man should not also have profited by the converse of the cultivated and quick-witted men in whose familiar society he lived, that he should not have over and over again discussed points of criticism and art with them, that he should not have had his curiosity; so alive to everything else, excited about those ancients whom university men then, no doubt, as now, extolled without too much knowledge of what they really were, that he should not have heard too much rather than too little of Aristotle's "Poetics," Quintilian's "Rhetoric," Horace's "Art of Poetry," and the "Unities," especially from Ben Jonson—in short, that he who speaks of himself as—

“Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,
With what he most enjoyed contented least,”

and who meditated so profoundly on every other topic of human concern, should never have turned his thought to the principles of that art which was both the delight and business of his life, the bread-winner alike for soul and body. Was there no harvest of the ear for him whose eye had stocked its garners so full as well-nigh to forestall all after-comers? Did he who could so counsel the practicers of an art in which he never arrived at eminence, as in Hamlet’s advice to the players, never take counsel with himself about that other art in which the instinct of the crowd, no less than the judgment of his rivals, awarded him an easy preëminence? If he had little Latin and less Greek, might he not have had enough of both for every practical purpose on this side pedantry? The most extraordinary, one might almost say contradictory, attainments have been ascribed to him, and yet he has been supposed incapable of what was within easy reach of every boy at Westminster School. There is a knowledge that comes of sympathy as living and genetic as that which comes of mere learning is sapless and unprocreant, and for this no profound study of the languages is needed.

If Shakespearé did not know the ancients, I think they were at least as unlucky in not knowing him. But is it incredible that he may have laid hold of an edition of the Greek tragedians, *Graecè et Latine*, and then, with such poor wits as he was master of, contrived to worry some considerable meaning out of them? There are at least one or two coincidences which, whether accidental or not, are curious, and which I do not remember to have seen noticed. In the

"Electra" of Sophocles, which is almost identical in its leading motive with "Hamlet," the Chorus consoles Electra for the supposed death of Orestes in the same commonplace way which Hamlet's uncle tries with him :

Θνητοῦ πέφυκας πατρός, Ἠλέκτρα, φρόνει
 Θνητὸς δ' Ὀρέστης* ὥστε μὴ λίαν στένε,
 Πᾶσιν γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν.

"Your father lost a father ;
 That father lost, lost his. . . .
 But to perséver
 In obstinate condolément is a course
 Of impious stubbornness. . . .
 'Tis common ; all that live must die."

Shakespeare expatiates somewhat more largely, but the sentiment in both cases is almost verbally identical. The resemblance is probably a chance one, for commonplace and consolation were always twin sisters, whom always to escape is given to no man ; but it is nevertheless curious. Here is another, from the "Œdipus Coloneus : "

Τοῖς τοι δίκαιοις χῶ βραχὺς νικᾷ μέγαν,
 "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

The Greek dramatists were somewhat fond of a trick of words in which there is a reduplication of sense as well as of assonance,* as in the "Electra"—

Ἀλεκτρα γηράσκουσιν ἀνυμέναια τε.

* The best instance I remember is in "The Frogs," where Bacchus pleads his inexperience at the oar, and says he is

ἄπειρος, ἀθαλάττωτος, ἀσαλαμίνιος,

which might be rendered—

"Unskilled, unsea-soned, and un-Salamised."

So Shakespeare—

“Unhouselled, disappointed, unaneled”;

and Milton after him, or, more likely, after the Greek—

“Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved.”

I mention these trifles, in passing, because they have interested me, and therefore may interest others. I lay no stress upon them, for, if once the conductors of Shakespeare's intelligence had been put in connection with those Attic brains, he would have reproduced their message in a form of his own. They would have inspired, and not enslaved him. His resemblance to them is that of consanguinity, more striking in expression than in mere resemblance of feature. The likeness between the Clytemnestra—*γυναικὸς ἀνδρόβουλον ἐλπίζον κέαρ*—of Æschylus and the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare was too remarkable to have escaped notice. That between the two poets in their choice of epithets is as great, though more difficult of proof. Yet I think an attentive student of Shakespeare can not fail to be reminded of something familiar to him in such phrases as “flame-eyed fire,” “flax-winged ships,” “star-neighboring peaks,” the rock Salmydessus—

“ . . . Rude jaw of the sea,
Harsh hostess of the seaman, step-mother
Of ships ”—

and the beacon with its “*speaking eye* of fire.” Surely there is more than a verbal, there is a genuine, similarity between the *ἀνῆριθμον γέλασμα* and “the unnumbered beach” and “multitudinous sea.” Æschylus, it seems to me, is willing, just as Shakespeare is, to risk the prosperity of a verse upon

a lucky throw of words, which may come up the sices of hardy metaphor or the ambace of conceit. There is such a difference between far-reaching and far-fetching! Poetry, to be sure, is always that daring one step beyond, which brings the right man to fortune, but leaves the wrong one in the ditch, and its law is, "Be bold once and again, yet be not over-bold." It is true, also, that masters of language are a little apt to play with it. But whatever fault may be found with Shakespeare in this respect will touch a tender spot in Æschylus also. Does he sometimes overload a word, so that the language not merely, as Dryden says, bends under him, but fairly gives way, and lets the reader's mind down with the shock as of a false step in taste? He has nothing worse than *πέλαγος ἀνθοῦν νεκροῖς*. A criticism, shallow in human nature, however deep in Campbell's "Rhetoric," has blamed him for making persons, under great excitement of sorrow, or whatever other emotion, parenthesize some trifling play upon words in the very height of their passion. Those who make such criticisms have either never felt a passion or seen one in action, or else they forget the exaltation of sensibility during such crises, so that the attention, whether of the senses or the mind, is arrested for the moment by what would be overlooked in ordinary moods. The more forceful the current, the more sharp the ripple from any alien substance interposed. A passion that looks forward, like revenge, or lust, or greed, goes right to its end, and is straightforward in its expression; but a tragic passion, which is in its nature unavailing, like disappointment, regret of the inevitable, or remorse, is reflective, and liable to be continu-

ally diverted by the suggestions of fancy. The one is a concentration of the will, which intensifies the character and the phrase that expresses it; in the other, the will is helpless, and, as in insanity, while the flow of the mind sets imperatively in one direction, it is liable to almost ludicrous interruptions and diversions upon the most trivial hint of involuntary association. I am ready to grant that Shakespeare sometimes allows his characters to spend time that might be better employed in carving some cherry-stone of a quibble; that he is sometimes tempted away from the natural by the quaint; that he sometimes forces a partial, even a verbal analogy between the abstract thought and the sensual image into an absolute identity, giving us a kind of serious pun. In a pun our pleasure arises from a gap in the logical nexus too wide for the reason, but which the ear can bridge in an instant. "Is that your own hare, or a wig?" The fancy is yet more tickled where logic is treated with a mock ceremonial of respect :

" His head was turned, *and so* he chewed
His pigtail till he died."

Now, when this kind of thing is done in earnest, the result is one of those ill-distributed syllogisms which in rhetoric are called conceits :

" Hard was the hand that struck the blow,
Soft was the heart that bled."

I have seen this passage from Warner cited for its beauty, though I should have thought nothing could be worse, had I not seen General Morris's

"Her heart and morning broke together
In tears."

Of course, I would not rank with these Gloucester's

"What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted";

though as mere rhetoric it belongs to the same class.* It might be defended as a bit of ghastly humor characteristic of the speaker. But at any rate it is not without precedent in the two greater Greek tragedians. In a chorus of the "Seven against Thebes" we have:

. . . . ἐν δὲ γαίᾳ
Ζωὰ φονορυντῶ
Μέμικται, κάρτα δ' εἶσ' ὀμαιομένοι.

And does not Sophocles make Ajax in his despair quibble upon his own name quite in the Shakespearean fashion, under similar circumstances? Nor does the coarseness with which our great poet is reproached lack an Æschylean parallel. Even the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet" would have found a true gossip in her of the "Agamemnon," who is so indiscreet in her confidences concerning the nursery-life of Orestes. Whether Raleigh is right or not in warning historians against following truth too close upon the heels, the caution is a good one for poets as respects truth to nature. But it is a mischievous fallacy in historian or critic to treat as a blemish of the man what is but the common

* I have taken the first passage in point that occurred to my memory. It may not be Shakespeare's, though probably his. The question of authorship is, I think, settled, so far as criticism can do it, in Mr. White's admirable essay appended to the "Second Part of Henry VI."

tincture of his age. It is to confound a spatter of mud with a moral stain.

But I have been led away from my immediate purpose. I did not intend to compare Shakespeare with the ancients, much less to justify his defects by theirs. In the fine arts a thing is either good in itself or it is nothing. It neither gains nor loses by having it shown that another good thing was also good in itself, any more than a bad thing profits by comparison with another that is worse. The final judgment of the world is intuitive, and is based, not on proof that a work possesses some of the qualities of another whose greatness is acknowledged, but on the immediate feeling that it carries to a high point of perfection certain qualities proper to itself. One does not flatter a fine pear by comparing it to a fine peach, nor learn what a fine peach is by tasting ever so many poor ones. The boy who makes his first bite into one does not need to ask his father if or how or why it is good. Because continuity is a merit in some kinds of writing, shall we refuse ourselves to the authentic charm of Montaigne's want of it? I have heard people complain of French tragedies because they were so very French. This, though it may not be to some particular tastes, and may from one point of view be a defect, is from another and far higher a distinguished merit. It is their flavor, as direct a telltale of the soil whence they drew it as French wines are. Suppose we should tax the Elgin marbles with being too Greek? When will people, nay, when will even critics, get over this self-defrauding trick of cheapening the excellence of one thing by that of another, this conclusive style of judgment which consists simply in belonging to the other parish? As one grows older, one loses

many idols, perhaps comes at last to have none at all, though he may honestly enough uncover in deference to the worshipers before any shrine. But for the seeming loss the compensation is ample. These saints of literature descend from their canopied remoteness to be even more precious as men like ourselves, our companions in field and street, speaking the same tongue, though in many dialects, and owning one creed under the most diverse masks of form.

Much of that merit of structure which is claimed for the ancient tragedy is due, if I am not mistaken, to circumstances external to the drama itself—to custom, to convention, to the exigencies of the theatre. It is formal rather than organic. The “Prometheus” seems to me one of the few Greek tragedies in which the whole creation has developed itself in perfect proportion from one central germ of living conception. The motive of the ancient drama is generally outside of it, while in the modern (at least in the English) it is necessarily within. Goethe, in a thoughtful essay,* written many years later than his famous criticism of “Hamlet” in “Wilhelm Meister,” says that the distinction between the two is the difference between *sollen* and *wollen*, that is, between *must* and *would*. He means that in the Greek drama the catastrophe is foreordained by an inexorable destiny, while the element of free will, and consequently of choice, is the very axis of the modern. The definition is conveniently portable, but it has its limitations. Goethe’s attention was too exclusively fixed on the Fate tragedies of the Greeks, and upon Shakespeare among the moderns. In the Spanish drama, for example, custom, loyalty, honor, and

* Shakspeare und sein Ende.

religion are as imperative and as inevitable as doom. In the "Antigone," on the other hand, the crisis lies in the character of the protagonist. In this sense it is modern, and is the first example of true character-painting in tragedy. But, from whatever cause, that exquisite analysis of complex motives, and the display of them in action and speech, which constitute for us the abiding charm of fiction, were quite unknown to the ancients. They reached their height in Cervantes and Shakespeare, and, though on a lower plane, still belong to the upper region of art in Le Sage, Molière, and Fielding. The personages of the Greek tragedy seem to be commonly rather types than individuals. In the modern tragedy, certainly in the four greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies, there is still something very like Destiny, only the place of it is changed. It is no longer above man, but in him; yet the catastrophe is as sternly foredoomed in the characters of Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet as it could be by an infallible oracle. In "Macbeth," indeed, the Weird Sisters introduce an element very like Fate; but generally it may be said that with the Greeks the character is involved in the action, while with Shakespeare the action is evolved from the character. In the one case, the motive of the play controls the personages; in the other, the chief personages are in themselves the motive to which all else is subsidiary. In any comparison, therefore, of Shakespeare with the ancients, we are not to contrast him with them as unapproachable models, but to consider whether he, like them, did not consciously endeavor, under the circumstances and limitations in which he found himself, to produce the most excellent thing possible, a model also in its own kind—whether higher or lower in degree is another question.

The only fair comparison would be between him and that one of his contemporaries who endeavored to anachronize himself, so to speak, and to subject his art, so far as might be, to the laws of classical composition. Ben Jonson was a great man, and has sufficiently proved that he had an eye for the external marks of character; but when he would make a whole of them, he gives us instead either a bundle of humors or an incorporated idea. With Shakespeare the plot is an interior organism, in Jonson an external contrivance. It is the difference between man and tortoise. In the one the osseous structure is out of sight, indeed, but sustains the flesh and blood that envelop it, while the other is boxed up and imprisoned in his bones.

I have been careful to confine myself to what may be called Shakespeare's ideal tragedies. In the purely historical or chronicle plays, the conditions are different, and his imagination submits itself to the necessary restrictions on its freedom of movement. Outside the tragedies also, "*The Tempest*" makes an exception worthy of notice. If I read it rightly, it is an example of how a great poet should write allegory—not embodying metaphysical abstractions, but giving us ideals abstracted from life itself, suggesting an under-meaning everywhere, forcing it upon us nowhere, tantalizing the mind with hints that imply so much and tell so little, and yet keep the attention all eye and ear with eager, if fruitless, expectation. Here the leading characters are not merely typical, but symbolical—that is, they do not illustrate a class of persons, they belong to universal nature. Consider the scene of the play. Shakespeare is wont to take some familiar story, to lay his scene in some place the name of which, at least, is familiar—well knowing the reserve of

power that lies in the familiar as a background, when things are set in front of it under a new and unexpected light. But in "The Tempest" the scene is laid nowhere, or certainly in no country laid down on any map. Nowhere, then? At once nowhere and anywhere—for it is in the soul of man, that still vexed island hung between the upper and the nether world, and liable to incursions from both. There is scarce a play of Shakespeare's in which there is such variety of character, none in which character has so little to do in the carrying on and development of the story. But consider for a moment if ever the imagination has been so embodied as in Prospero, the fancy as in Ariel, the brute understanding as in Caliban, who, the moment his poor wits are warmed with the glorious liquor of Stephano, plots rebellion against his natural lord, the higher reason. Miranda is mere abstract womanhood, as truly so before she sees Ferdinand as Eve before she was wakened to consciousness by the echo of her own nature coming back to her, the same, and yet not the same, from that of Adam. Ferdinand, again, is nothing more than Youth compelled to drudge at something he despises, till the sacrifice of will and abnegation of self win him his ideal in Miranda. The subordinate personages are simply types: Sebastian and Antonio, of weak character and evil ambition; Gonzalo, of average sense and honesty; Adrian and Francisco, of the walking gentlemen who serve to fill up a world. They are not characters in the same sense with Iago, Falstaff, Shallow, or Leontius; and it is curious how every one of them loses his way in this enchanted island of life, all the victims of one illusion after another, except Prospero, whose ministers are purely ideal. The whole play, indeed, is a succes-

sion of illusions, winding up with those solemn words of the great enchanter who had summoned to his service every shape of merriment or passion, every figure in the great tragi-comedy of life, and who was now bidding farewell to the scene of his triumphs. For in Prospero shall we not recognize the Artist himself—

“That did not better for his life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds,
Whence comes it that his name receives a brand ”—

who has forfeited a shining place in the world's eye by devotion to his art, and who, turned adrift on the ocean of life in the leaky carcass of a boat, has shipwrecked on that Fortunate Island (as men always do who find their true vocation) where he is absolute lord, making all the powers of nature serve him, but with Ariel and Caliban as special ministers? Of whom else could he have been thinking, when he says—

“ . . . Graves, at my command,
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let them forth,
By my so potent art ”?

Was this man, so extraordinary from whatever side we look at him, who ran so easily through the whole scale of human sentiment, from the homely common sense of, “When two men ride of one horse, one *must* ride behind,” to the transcendental subtilty of—

“No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change;
Thy pyramids, built up with newer might,
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
They are but dressings of a former sight ”—

was he alone so unconscious of powers, some part of whose magic is recognized by all mankind, from the schoolboy to the philosopher, that he merely sat by and saw them go without the least notion what they were about? Was he an inspired idiot, *vôtre bizarre Shakespeare*? a vast, irregular genius? a simple rustic, warbling his *native* wood-notes wild, in other words, insensible to the benefits of culture? When attempts have been made at various times to prove that this singular and seemingly contradictory creature, not one, but all mankind's epitome, was a musician, a lawyer, a doctor, a Catholic, a Protestant, an atheist, an Irishman, a discoverer of the circulation of the blood, and finally that he was not himself, but somebody else, is it not a little odd that the last thing anybody should have thought of proving him was an artist? Nobody believes any longer that immediate inspiration is possible in modern times (as if God had grown old)—at least, nobody believes it of the prophets of those days, of John of Leyden, or Reeves, or Muggleton—and yet everybody seems to take it for granted of this one man Shakespeare. He, somehow or other, without knowing it, was able to do what none of the rest of them, though knowing it all too perfectly well, could begin to do. Everybody seems to get afraid of him in turn. Voltaire plays gentleman usher for him to his countrymen, and then, perceiving that his countrymen find a favor in him beyond that of “*Zaïre*” or “*Mahomed*,” discovers him to be a *Sauvage ivre, sans le moindre étincelle de bon goût, et sans le moindre connoissance des règles*. Goethe, who tells us that “*Götz von Berlichingen*” was written in the Shakespearean manner—and we certainly should not have guessed it, if he had not blabbed—comes to the final conclusion that Shakespeare was a poet,

but not a dramatist. Châteaubriand thinks that he has corrupted art. "If, to attain," he says, "the height of tragic art, it be enough to heap together disparate scenes without order and without connection, to dovetail the burlesque with the pathetic, to set the water-carrier beside the monarch and the huckster-wench beside the queen, who may not reasonably flatter himself with being the rival of the greatest masters? Whoever should give himself the trouble to retrace a single one of his days, . . . to keep a journal from hour to hour, would have made a drama in the fashion of the English poet." But there are journals and journals, as the French say, and what goes into them depends on the eye that gathers for them. It is a long step from St. Simon to Dangeau, from Pepys to Thoresby, from Shakespeare even to the Marquis de Châteaubriand. M. Hugo alone, convinced that, as founder of the French Romantic School, there is a kind of family likeness between himself and Shakespeare, stands boldly forth to prove the father as extravagant as the son. Calm yourself, M. Hugo, you are no more a child of his than Will Davenant was! But, after all, is it such a great crime to produce something absolutely new in a world so tedious as ours, and so apt to tell its old stories over again? I do not mean new in substance, but in the manner of presentation. Surely the highest office of a great poet is to show us how much variety, freshness, and opportunity abides in the obvious and familiar. He invents nothing, but seems rather to *rediscover* the world about him, and his penetrating vision gives to things of daily encounter something of the strangeness of new creation. Meanwhile the changed conditions of modern life demand a change in the method of treatment. The ideal is not a strait waist-

coat. Because "Alexis and Dora" is so charming, shall we have no "Paul and Virginia"? It was the idle endeavor to reproduce the old enchantment in the old way that gave us the pastoral, sent to the garret now with our grandmothers' achievements of the same sort in worsted. Every age says to its poets, like a mistress to her lover, "Tell me what I am like"; and he who succeeds in catching the evanescent expression that reveals character—which is as much as to say, what is intrinsically human—will be found to have caught something as imperishable as human nature itself. Aristophanes, by the vital and essential qualities of his humorous satire, is already more nearly our contemporary than Molière; and even the "Trouvères," careless and trivial as they mostly are, could fecundate a great poet like Chaucer, and are still delightful reading.

The Attic tragedy still keeps its hold upon the loyalty of scholars through their imagination, or their pedantry, or their feeling of an exclusive property, as may happen, and, however alloyed with baser matter, this loyalty is legitimate and well bestowed. But the dominion of the Shakespearean is even wider. It pushes forward its boundaries from year to year, and moves no landmark backward. Here Alfieri and Lessing own a common allegiance; and the loyalty to him is one not of guild or tradition, but of conviction and enthusiasm. Can this be said of any other modern? of robust Corneille? of tender Racine? of Calderon even, with his tropical warmth and vigor of production? The Greeks and he are alike and alone in this, and for the same reason, that both are unapproachably the highest in their kind. Call him Gothic, if you like, but the inspiring mind that presided over the growth of these clustered masses of arch

and spire and pinnacle and buttress is neither Greek nor Gothic—it is simply genius lending itself to embody the new desire of man's mind, as it had embodied the old. After all, to be delightful is to be classic, and the chaotic never pleases long. But manifoldness is not confusion any more than formalism is simplicity. If Shakespeare rejected the unities, as I think he who complains of "Art made tonguetied by Authority" might very well deliberately do, it was for the sake of an imaginative unity more intimate than any of time and place. The antique in itself is not the ideal, though its remoteness from the vulgarity of every-day associations helps to make it seem so. The true ideal is not opposed to the real, nor is it any artificial heightening thereof, but lies *in* it, and blessed are the eyes that find it! It is the *mens divini*or which hides within the actual, transfiguring matter-of-fact into matter-of-meaning for him who has the gift of second-sight. In this sense Hogarth is often more truly ideal than Raphael, Shakespeare often more truly so than the Greeks. I think it is a more or less conscious perception of this ideality, as it is a more or less well-grounded persuasion of it as respects the Greeks, that assures to him, as to them, and with equal justice, a permanent supremacy over the minds of men. This gives to his characters their universality, to his thought its irradiating property, while the artistic purpose, running through and combining the endless variety of scene and character, will alone account for his power of dramatic effect. Goethe affirmed that, without Schröder's prunings and adaptations, Shakespeare was too undramatic for the German theatre—that, if the theory that his plays should be represented textually should prevail, he would be driven from the boards. The

theory has prevailed, and he not only holds his own, but is acted oftener than ever. It is not irregular genius that can do this, for surely Germany need not go abroad for what her own Werners could more than amply supply her with.

But I would much rather quote a fine saying than a bad prophecy of a man to whom I owe so much. Goethe, in one of the most perfect of his shorter poems, tells us that a poem is like a painted window. Seen from without (and he accordingly justifies the Philistine, who never looks at them otherwise) they seem dingy and confused enough; but enter, and then—

“Da ist's auf einmal farbig helle,
Geschicht' und Zierath glänzt in Schnelle.”

With the same feeling he says elsewhere in prose, that “there is a destructive criticism and a productive. The former is very easy; for one has only to set up in his mind any standard, any model, however narrow” (let us say the Greeks), “and then boldly assert that the work under review does not match with it, and therefore is good for nothing—the matter is settled, and one must at once deny its claim. Productive criticism is a great deal more difficult; it asks, What did the author propose to himself? Is what he proposes reasonable and comprehensible? and how far has he succeeded in carrying it out?” It is in applying this latter kind of criticism to Shakespeare that the Germans have set us an example worthy of all commendation. If they have been sometimes over-subtile, they at least had the merit of first looking at his works as wholes, as something that very likely contained an idea, perhaps conveyed a moral, if we could get at it. The illumination lent us by

most of the English commentators reminds us of the candles which guides hold up to show us a picture in a dark place, the smoke of which gradually makes the work of the artist invisible under its repeated layers. Lessing, as might have been expected, opened the first glimpse in the new direction; Goethe followed with his famous exposition of Hamlet; A. W. Schlegel took a more comprehensive view in his "Lectures," which Coleridge worked over into English, adding many fine criticisms of his own on single passages; and, finally, Gervinus has devoted four volumes to a comment on the plays, full of excellent matter, though pushing the moral exegesis beyond all reasonable bounds.* With the help of all these, and especially of the last, I shall apply this theory of criticism to Hamlet, not in the hope of saying anything new, but of bringing something to the support of the thesis that, if Shakespeare was skillful as a playwright, he was even greater as a dramatist; that, if his immediate business was to fill the theatre, his higher object was to create something which, by fulfilling the conditions and answering the requirements of modern life, should as truly deserve to be called a work of art as others had deserved it by doing the same thing in former times and under other circumstances. Supposing him to have accepted—consciously or not is of little importance—the new terms of the problem which makes character the pivot of dramatic action, and consequently the key of dramatic unity, how far did he succeed?

Before attempting my analysis, I must clear away a little rubbish. Are such anachronisms as those of which Voltaire

* I do not mention Ulrici's book, for it seems to me unwieldy and dull—zeal without knowledge.

accuses Shakespeare in "Hamlet," such as the introduction of cannon before the invention of gunpowder, and making Christians of the Danes three centuries too soon, of the least bearing æsthetically? I think not; but as they are of a piece with a great many other criticisms upon the great poet, it is worth while to dwell upon them a moment.

The first demand we make upon whatever claims to be a work of art (and we have a right to make it) is that it shall be *in keeping*. Now this propriety is of two kinds, either extrinsic or intrinsic. In the first I should class whatever relates rather to the body than the soul of the work, such as fidelity to the facts of history (wherever that is important), congruity of costume, and the like—in short, whatever might come under the head of *picturesque* truth, a departure from which would shock too rudely our preconceived associations. I have seen an Indian chief in French books, and he seemed to me almost tragic; but, put upon the stage in tragedy, he would have been ludicrous. Lichtenberg, writing from London in 1775, tells us that Garrick played Hamlet in a suit of the French fashion, then commonly worn, and that he was blamed for it by some of the critics; but, he says, one hears no such criticism during the play, nor on the way home, nor at supper afterward, nor indeed till the emotion roused by the great actor has had time to subside. He justifies Garrick, though we should not be able to endure it now. Yet nothing would be gained by trying to make Hamlet's costume true to the assumed period of the play, for the scene of it is laid in a Denmark that has no dates.

In the second and more important category I should put, first, coördination of character, that is, a certain variety

in harmony of the personages of a drama, as in the attitudes and coloring of the figures in a pictorial composition, so that, while mutually relieving and setting off each other, they shall combine in the total impression; second, that subordinate truth to nature which makes each character coherent in itself; and, third, such propriety of costume and the like as shall satisfy the superhistoric sense, to which, and to which alone, the higher drama appeals. All these come within the scope of *imaginative* truth. To illustrate my third head by an example. Tieck criticises John Kemble's dressing for Macbeth in a modern Highland costume, as being ungraceful without any countervailing merit of historical exactness. I think a deeper reason for his dissatisfaction might be found in the fact that this garb, with its purely modern and British army associations, is out of place on Fores Heath, and drags the Weird Sisters down with it from their proper imaginative remoteness in the gloom of the past to the disenchanting glare of the footlights. It is not the antiquarian, but the poetic conscience, that is wounded. To this, exactness, so far as concerns ideal representation, may not only not be truth, but may even be opposed to it. Anachronisms and the like are in themselves of no account, and become important only when they make a gap too wide for our illusion to cross unconsciously, that is, when they are anacoluthons to the imagination. The aim of the artist is psychologic, not historic truth. It is comparatively easy for an author to *get up* any period with tolerable minuteness in externals, but readers and audiences find more difficulty in getting them down, though oblivion swallows scores of them at a gulp. The saving truth in such matters is a truth to essential and permanent characteristics. The Ulysses of

Shakespeare, like the Ulysses of Dante and Tennyson, more or less harmonizes with our ideal conception of the wary, long-considering, though adventurous son of Laertes, yet Simon Lord Lovat is doubtless nearer the original type. In "Hamlet," though there is no Denmark of the ninth century, Shakespeare has suggested the prevailing rudeness of manners quite enough for his purpose. We see it in the single combat of Hamlet's father with the elder Fortinbras; in the vulgar wassail of the King; in the English monarch being expected to hang Rosencrantz and Guildenstern out of hand merely to oblige his cousin of Denmark; in Laertes, sent to Paris to be made a gentleman of, becoming instantly capable of any the most barbarous treachery to glut his vengeance. We can not fancy Ragnar Lodbrog or Eric the Red matriculating at Wittenberg, but it was essential that Hamlet should be a scholar, and Shakespeare sends him thither without more ado. All through the play we get the notion of a state of society in which a savage nature has disguised itself in the externals of civilization, like a Maori deacon, who has only to strip and he becomes once more a tattooed pagan with his mouth watering for a spare-rib of his pastor. Historically, at the date of "Hamlet," the Danes were in the habit of burning their enemies alive in their houses, with as much of their family about them as might be to make it comfortable. Shakespeare seems purposely to have dissociated his play from history by changing nearly every name in the original legend. The motive of the play—revenge as a religious duty—belongs only to a social state in which the traditions of barbarism are still operative, but, with infallible artistic judgment, Shakespeare has chosen, not untamed nature, as he found it in history, but the period of transition, a period

of which the times are always out of joint, and thus the irresolution which has its root in Hamlet's own character is stimulated by the very incompatibility of that legacy of vengeance he has inherited from the past with the new culture and refinement of which he is the representative. One of the few books which Shakespeare is known to have possessed was Florio's Montaigne, and he might well have transferred the Frenchman's motto, "*Que sçais-je?*" to the front of his tragedy; nor can I help fancying something more than accident in the fact that Hamlet has been a student at Wittenberg, whence those new ideas went forth, of whose results in unsettling men's faith, and consequently disqualifying them for promptness in action, Shakespeare had been not only an eye-witness, but which he must actually have experienced in himself.

One other objection let me touch upon here, especially as it has been urged against "*Hamlet*," and that is the introduction of low characters and comic scenes in tragedy. Even Garrick, who had just assisted at the Stratford Jubilee, where Shakespeare had been pronounced divine, was induced by this absurd outcry for the proprieties of the tragic stage to omit the grave-diggers' scene from "*Hamlet*." Leaving apart the fact that Shakespeare would not have been the representative poet he is if he had not given expression to this striking tendency of the northern races, which shows itself constantly, not only in their literature, but even in their mythology and their architecture, the grave-diggers' scene always impresses me as one of the most pathetic in the whole tragedy. That Shakespeare introduced such scenes and characters with deliberate intention, and with a view to artistic relief and contrast, there can

hardly be a doubt. We must take it for granted that a man whose works show everywhere the results of judgment sometimes acted with forethought. I find the springs of the profoundest sorrow and pity in this hardened indifference of the grave-diggers, in their careless discussion as to whether Ophelia's death was by suicide or no, in their singing and jesting at their dreary work.

“ A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
For—and a shrouding-sheet :
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet ! ”

We know who is to be the guest of this earthen hospitality—how much beauty, love, and heart-break are to be covered in that pit of clay. All we remember of Ophelia reacts upon us with tenfold force, and we recoil from our amusement at the ghastly drollery of the two delvers with a shock of horror. That the unconscious Hamlet should stumble on *this* grave of all others, that it should be *here* that he should pause to muse humorously on death and decay—all this prepares us for the revulsion of passion in the next scene, and for the frantic confession :

“ I loved Ophelia ; forty thousand brothers
Could not with all *their* quantity of love
Make up my sum ! ”

And it is only here that such an asseveration would be true even to the feeling of the moment ; for it is plain from all we know of Hamlet that he could not have so loved Ophelia ; that he was incapable of the self-abandonment of a true passion ; that he would have analyzed this emotion as he does all others ; would have peeped and botanized upon it

till it became to him a mere matter of scientific interest. All this force of contrast, and this horror of surprise, were necessary so to intensify his remorseful regret that he should believe himself for once in earnest. The speech of the King, "O, he is mad, Laertes," recalls him to himself, and he at once begins to rave :

"Zounds ! show me what thou'lt do !

Woul't weep ? woul't fight ? woul't fast ? woul't tear thyself ?

Woul't drink up Eysil ? eat a crocodile ? "

It is easy to see that the whole plot hinges upon the character of Hamlet, that Shakespeare's conception of this was the ovum out of which the whole organism was hatched. And here let me remark that there is a kind of genealogical necessity in the character—a thing not altogether strange to the attentive reader of Shakespeare. Hamlet seems the natural result of the mixture of father and mother in his temperament, the resolution and persistence of the one, like sound timber wormholed and made shaky, as it were, by the other's infirmity of will and discontinuity of purpose. In natures so imperfectly mixed it is not uncommon to find vehemence of intention the prelude and counterpoise of weak performance, the conscious nature striving to keep up its self-respect by a triumph in words all the more resolute that it feels assured beforehand of inevitable defeat in action. As in such slipshod housekeeping men are their own largest creditors, they find it easy to stave off utter bankruptcy of conscience by taking up one unpaid promise with another larger, and at heavier interest, till such self-swindling becomes habitual and by degrees almost painless. How did Coleridge discount his own notes of this kind with

less and less specie as the figures lengthened on the paper ! As with Hamlet, so it is with Ophelia and Laertes. The father's feebleness comes up again in the wasting heart-break and gentle lunacy of the daughter, while the son shows it in a rashness of impulse and act, a kind of crankiness, of whose essential feebleness we are all the more sensible as contrasted with a nature so steady on its keel, and drawing so much water, as that of Horatio—the foil at once, in different ways, to both him and Hamlet. It was natural, also, that the daughter of self-conceited old Polonius should have her softness stiffened with a fiber of obstinacy; for there are two kinds of weakness, that which breaks, and that which bends. Ophelia's is of the former kind; Hero is her counterpart, giving way before calamity, and rising again so soon as the pressure is removed.

I find two passages in Dante that contain the exactest possible definition of that habit or quality of Hamlet's mind which justifies the tragic turn of the play, and renders it natural and unavoidable from the beginning. The first is from the second canto of the "Inferno":

" E quale è quei che disvuol ciò che volle,
E per nuovi pensier cangia proposta,
Si che del cominciar tutto si tolle ;
Tal mi fec' io in quella oscura costa :
Perchè pensando consumai la impresa
Che fu nel cominciar cotanto tosta."

" And, like the man who unwill's what he willed,
And for new thoughts doth change his first intent,
So that he can not anywhere begin,
Such became I upon that slope obscure,
Because with thinking I consumed resolve,
That was so ready at the setting out."

Again, in the fifth of the "Purgatorio" :

" Che sempre l' uomo in cui pensier rampoglia
Sovra pensier, da sè dilunga il segno,
Perchè la foga l' un dell' altro insolla."

" For always he in whom one thought buds forth
Out of another farther puts the goal,
For each has only force to mar the other."

Dante was a profound metaphysician, and as in the first passage he describes and defines a certain quality of mind, so in the other he tells us its result in the character and life, namely, indecision and failure—the goal *farther* off at the end than at the beginning. It is remarkable how close a resemblance of thought, and even of expression, there is between the former of these quotations and a part of Hamlet's famous soliloquy :

" Thus conscience [i. e., consciousness] doth make cowards of us all :
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action ! "

It is an inherent peculiarity of a mind like Hamlet's that it should be conscious of its own defect. Men of his type are for ever analyzing their own emotions and motives. They can not do anything, because they always see two ways of doing it. They can not determine on any course of action, because they are always, as it were, standing at the cross-roads, and see too well the disadvantages of every one of them. It is not that they are incapable of resolve, but somehow the band between the motive power and the operative

faculties is relaxed and loose. The engine works, but the machinery it should drive stands still. The imagination is so much in overplus, that thinking a thing becomes better than doing it, and thought with its easy perfection, capable of everything because it can accomplish everything with ideal means, is vastly more attractive and satisfactory than deed, which must be wrought at best with imperfect instruments, and always falls short of the conception that went before it. "If to do," says Portia in "The Merchant of Venice"—"if to do were as easy as to know what 't were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces." Hamlet knows only too well what 'twere good to do, but he palters with everything in a double sense: he sees the grain of good there is in evil, and the grain of evil there is in good, as they exist in the world, and, finding that he can make those feather-weighted accidents balance each other, infers that there is little to choose between the essences themselves. He is of Montaigne's mind, and says expressly that "there is nothing good or ill, but thinking makes it so." He dwells so exclusively in the world of ideas that the world of facts seems trifling; nothing is worth the while; and he has been so long objectless and purposeless, so far as actual life is concerned, that, when at last an object and an aim are forced upon him, he can not deal with them, and gropes about vainly for a motive outside of himself that shall marshal his thoughts for him and guide his faculties into the path of action. He is the victim not so much of feebleness of will as of an intellectual indifference that hinders the will from working long in any one direction. He wishes to will, but never wills. His continual iteration of resolve shows that he has no resolution.

He is capable of passionate energy where the occasion presents itself suddenly from without, because nothing is so irritable as conscious irresolution with a duty to perform. But of deliberate energy he is not capable; for there the impulse must come from within, and the blade of his analysis is so subtle that it can divide the finest hair of motive 'twixt north and northwest side, leaving him desperate to choose between them. The very consciousness of his defect is an insuperable bar to his repairing it; for the unity of purpose, which infuses every fiber of the character with will available whenever wanted, is impossible where the mind can never rest till it has resolved that unity into its component elements, and satisfied itself which on the whole is of greater value. A critical instinct so insatiable that it must turn upon itself, for lack of something else to hew and hack, becomes incapable at last of originating anything except indecision. It becomes infallible in what *not* to do. How easily he might have accomplished his task is shown by the conduct of Laertes. When *he* has a death to avenge he raises a mob, breaks into the palace, bullies the King, and proves how weak the usurper really was.

The world is the victim of splendid parts, and is slow to accept a rounded whole, because that is something which is long in completing, still longer in demonstrating its completion. We like to be surprised into admiration, and not logically convinced that we ought to admire. We are willing to be delighted with success, though we are somewhat indifferent to the homely qualities which insure it. Our thought is so filled with the rocket's burst of momentary splendor so far above us, that we forget the poor stick, useful and unseen, that made its climbing possible. One of

these homely qualities is continuity of character, and it escapes present applause because it tells chiefly, in the long run, in results. With his usual tact, Shakespeare has brought in such a character as a contrast and foil to Hamlet. Horatio is the only complete *man* in the play—solid, well-knit, and true; a noble, quiet nature, with that highest of all qualities, judgment; always sane and prompt, who never drags his anchors for any wind of opinion or fortune, but grips all the closer to the reality of things. He seems one of those calm, undemonstrative men whom we love and admire without asking to know why, crediting them with the capacity of great things, without any test of actual achievement, because we feel that their manhood is a constant quality, and no mere accident of circumstance and opportunity. Such men are always sure of the presence of their highest self on demand. Hamlet is continually drawing bills on the future, secured by his promise of himself to himself, which he can never redeem. His own somewhat feminine nature recognizes its complement in Horatio, and clings to it instinctively, as naturally as Horatio is attracted by that fatal gift of imagination, the absence of which makes the strength of his own character, as its overplus does the weakness of Hamlet's. It is a happy marriage of two minds drawn together by the charm of unlikeness. Hamlet feels in Horatio the solid steadiness which he misses in himself; Horatio in Hamlet that need of service and sustainment to render which gives him a consciousness of his own value. Hamlet fills the place of a woman to Horatio, revealing him to himself not only in what he says, but by a constant claim upon his strength of nature; and there is great psychological truth in making suicide the first impulse of this quiet, un-

demonstrative man, after Hamlet's death, as if the very reason for his being were taken away with his friend's need of him. In his grief, he for the first and only time speaks of himself, is first made conscious of himself by his loss. If this manly reserve of Horatio be true to nature, not less so are the communicativeness of Hamlet, and his tendency to soliloquize. If self-consciousness be alien to the one, it is just as truly the happiness of the other. Like a musician distrustful of himself, he is for ever tuning his instrument, first overstraining this cord a little, and then that, but unable to bring them into unison, or to profit by it if he could.

We do not believe that Horatio ever thought he "was not a pipe for Fortune's finger to play what stop she please," till Hamlet told him so. That was Fortune's affair, not his; let her try it, if she liked. He is unconscious of his own peculiar qualities, as men of decision commonly are, or they would not be men of decision. When there is a thing to be done, they go straight at it, and for the time there is nothing else for them in the whole universe but themselves and their object. Hamlet, on the other hand, is always studying himself. This world and the other, too, are always present to his mind, and there in the corner is the little black kobold of a doubt making mouths at him. He breaks down the bridges before him, not behind him, as a man of action would do; but there is something more than this. He is an ingrained skeptic; though his is the skepticism, not of reason, but of feeling, whose root is want of faith in himself. In him it is passive, a malady rather than a function of the mind. We might call him insincere: not that he was in any sense a hypocrite, but only that he never was and never could be in earnest—never could be, because no man with-

out intense faith in something ever can. Even if he only believed in himself, that were better than nothing; for it will carry a man a great way in the outward successes of life, nay, will even sometimes give him the Archimedean fulcrum for moving the world. But Hamlet doubts everything. He doubts the immortality of the soul, just after seeing his father's spirit, and hearing from his mouth the secrets of the other world. He doubts Horatio even, and swears him to secrecy on the cross of his sword, though probably he himself has no assured belief in the sacredness of the symbol. He doubts Ophelia, and asks her, "Are you honest?" He doubts the ghost, after he has had a little time to think about it, and so gets up the play to test the guilt of the King. And how coherent the whole character is! With what perfect tact and judgment Shakespeare, in the advice to the players, makes him an exquisite critic! For just here that part of his character which would be weak in dealing with affairs is strong. A wise skepticism is the first attribute of a good critic. He must not believe that the fire-insurance offices will raise their rates of premium on Charles River, because the new volume of poems is printing at Riverside or the University Press. He must not believe so profoundly in the ancients as to think it wholly out of the question that the world has still vigor enough in its loins to beget some one who will one of these days be as good an ancient as any of them.

Another striking quality in Hamlet's nature is his perpetual inclination to irony. I think this has been generally passed over too lightly, as if it were something external and accidental, rather assumed as a mask than part of the real nature of the man. It seems to me to go deeper, to be

something innate, and not merely factitious. It is nothing like the grave irony of Socrates, which was the weapon of a man thoroughly in earnest—the *boomerang* of argument, which one throws in the opposite direction of what he means to hit, and which seems to be flying away from the adversary, who will presently find himself knocked down by it. It is not like the irony of Timon, which is but the willful refraction of a clear mind twisting awry whatever enters it—or of Iago, which is the slime that a nature essentially evil loves to trail over all beauty and goodness to taint them with distrust: it is the half-jest, half-earnest of an inactive temperament that has not quite made up its mind whether life is a reality or no, whether men were not made in jest, and which amuses itself equally with finding a deep meaning in trivial things and a trifling one in the profoundest mysteries of being, because the want of earnestness in its own essence infects everything else with its own indifference. If there be now and then an unmannerly rudeness and bitterness in it, as in the scenes with Polonius and Osrick, we must remember that Hamlet was just in the condition which spurs men to sallies of this kind: dissatisfied, at one neither with the world nor with himself, and accordingly casting about for something out of himself to vent his spleen upon. But even in these passages there is no hint of earnestness, of any purpose beyond the moment; they are mere cat's-paws of vexation, and not the deep-raking ground-swell of passion, as we see it in the sarcasm of Lear.

The question of Hamlet's madness has been much discussed and variously decided. High medical authority has pronounced, as usual, on both sides of the question. But

the induction has been drawn from too narrow premises, being based on a mere diagnosis of the *case*, and not on an appreciation of the character in its completeness. We have a case of pretended madness in the Edgar of "King Lear"; and it is certainly true that that is a charcoal sketch, coarsely outlined, compared with the delicate drawing, the lights, shades, and half-tints of the portraiture in Hamlet. But does this tend to prove that the madness of the latter, because truer to the recorded observation of experts, is real, and meant to be real, as the other to be fictitious? Not in the least, as it appears to me. Hamlet, among all the characters of Shakespeare, is the most eminently a metaphysician and psychologist. He is a close observer, continually analyzing his own nature and that of others, letting fall his little drops of acid irony on all who come near him, to make them show what they are made of. Even Ophelia is not too sacred, Osrick not too contemptible for experiment. If such a man assumed madness, he would play his part perfectly. If Shakespeare himself, without going mad, could so observe and remember all the abnormal symptoms as to be able to reproduce them in Hamlet, why should it be beyond the power of Hamlet to reproduce them in himself? If you deprive Hamlet of reason, there is no truly tragic motive left. He would be a fit subject for Bedlam, but not for the stage. We might have pathology enough, but no pathos. Ajax first becomes tragic when he recovers his wits. If Hamlet is irresponsible, the whole play is a chaos. That he is not so might be proved by evidence enough, were it not labor thrown away.

This feigned madness of Hamlet's is one of the few points in which Shakespeare has kept close to the old story

on which he founded his play; and, as he never decided without deliberation, so he never acted without unerring judgment. Hamlet *drifts* through the whole tragedy. He never keeps on one tack long enough to get steerage-way, even if, in a nature like his, with those electric streamers of whim and fancy for ever wavering across the vault of his brain, the needle of judgment would point in one direction long enough to strike a course by. The scheme of simulated insanity is precisely the one he would have been likely to hit upon, because it enabled him to follow his own bent, and to drift with an apparent purpose, postponing decisive action by the very means he adopts to arrive at its accomplishment, and satisfying himself with the show of doing something, that he may escape so much the longer the dreaded necessity of really doing anything at all. It enables him to *play* with life and duty, instead of taking them by the rougher side, where alone any firm grip is possible—to feel that he is on the way toward accomplishing somewhat, when he is really paltering with his own irresolution. Nothing, I think, could be more finely imagined than this. Voltaire complains that he goes mad without any sufficient object or result. Perfectly true, and precisely what was most natural for him to do, and, accordingly, precisely what Shakespeare meant that he should do. It was delightful to him to indulge his imagination and humor, to prove his capacity for something by playing a part; the one thing he could not do was to bring himself to *act*, unless when surprised by a sudden impulse of suspicion, as where he kills Polonius, and there he could not see his victim. He discourses admirably of suicide, but does not kill himself; he talks daggers, but uses none. He puts by the chance to kill the King with the

excuse that he will not do it while he is praying, lest his soul be saved thereby, though it is more than doubtful whether he believed it himself. He allows himself to be packed off to England, without any motive except that it would for the time take him farther from a present duty: the more disagreeable to a nature like his because it *was* present, and not a mere matter for speculative consideration. When Goethe made his famous comparison of the acorn planted in a vase which it bursts with its growth, and says that in like manner Hamlet is a nature which breaks down under the weight of a duty too great for it to bear, he seems to have considered the character too much from one side. Had Hamlet actually killed himself to escape his too onerous commission, Goethe's conception of him would have been satisfactory enough. But Hamlet was hardly a sentimentalist, like Werther; on the contrary, he saw things only too clearly in the dry north-light of the intellect. It is chance that at last brings him to his end. It would appear rather that Shakespeare intended to show us an imaginative temperament brought face to face with actualities, into any clear relation of sympathy with which it can not bring itself. The very means that Shakespeare makes use of to lay upon him the obligation of acting—the ghost—really seems to make it all the harder for him to act; for the specter but gives an additional excitement to his imagination and a fresh topic for his skepticism.

I shall not attempt to evolve any high moral significance from the play, even if I thought it possible; for that would be aside from the present purpose. The scope of the higher drama is to represent life; not every-day life, it is true, but life lifted above the plane of bread-and-butter associations,

by nobler reaches of language, by the influence at once inspiring and modulating of verse, by an intenser play of passion condensing that misty mixture of feeling and reflection which makes the ordinary atmosphere of existence into flashes of thought and phrase whose brief but terrible illumination prints the outworn landscape of every day upon our brains, with its little motives and mean results, in lines of telltale fire. The moral office of tragedy is to show us our own weaknesses idealized in grander figures and more awful results—to teach us that what we pardon in ourselves as venial faults, if they seem to have but slight influence on our immediate fortunes, have arms as long as those of kings, and reach forward to the catastrophe of our lives; that they are dry-rotting the very fiber of will and conscience, so that, if we should be brought to the test of a great temptation or a stringent emergency, we must be involved in a ruin as sudden and complete as that we shudder at in the unreal scene of the theatre. But the primary *object* of a tragedy is not to inculcate a formal moral. Representing life, it teaches, like life, by indirection, by those nods and winks that are thrown away on us blind horses in such profusion. We may learn, to be sure, plenty of lessons from Shakespeare. We are not likely to have kingdoms to divide, crowns foretold us by weird sisters, a father's death to avenge, or to kill our wives from jealousy; but Lear may teach us to draw the line more clearly between a wise generosity and a loose-handed weakness of giving; Macbeth, how one sin involves another, and for ever another, by a fatal parthenogenesis, and that the key which unlocks forbidden doors to our will or passion leaves a stain on the hand, that may not be so dark as blood, but that will not out; Hamlet, that all the

noblest gifts of person, temperament, and mind slip like sand through the grasp of an infirm purpose; Othello, that the perpetual silt of some one weakness, the eddies of a suspicious temper depositing their one impalpable layer after another, may build up a shoal on which an heroic life and an otherwise magnanimous nature may bilge and go to pieces. All this we may learn, and much more, and Shakespeare was no doubt well aware of all this and more; but I do not believe that he wrote his plays with any such didactic purpose. He knew human nature too well not to know that one thorn of experience is worth a whole wilderness of warning—that, where one man shapes his life by precept and example, there are a thousand who have it shaped for them by impulse and by circumstances. He did not mean his great tragedies for scarecrows, as if the nailing of one hawk to the barn-door would prevent the next from coming down souse into the hen-yard. No, it is not the poor bleaching victim hung up to moult its draggled feathers in the rain that he wishes to show us. He loves the hawk-nature as well as the hen-nature; and, if he is unequalled in anything, it is in that sunny breadth of view, that impregnability of reason, that looks down all ranks and conditions of men, all fortune and misfortune, with the equal eye of the pure artist.

Whether I have fancied anything into Hamlet which the author never dreamed of putting there I do not greatly concern myself to inquire. Poets are always entitled to a royalty on whatever we find in their works; for these fine creations as truly build themselves up in the brain as they are built up with deliberate forethought. Praise art as we will, that which the artist did not mean to put into his work, but

which found itself there by some generous process of nature of which he was as unaware as the blue river is of its rhyme with the blue sky, has somewhat in it that snatches us into sympathy with higher things than those which come by plot and observation. Goethe wrote his "Faust" in its earliest form without a thought of the deeper meaning which the exposition of an age of criticism was to find in it; without foremeaning it, he had impersonated in Mephistopheles the genius of his century. Shall this subtract from the debt we owe him? Not at all. If originality were conscious of itself, it would have lost its right to be original. I believe that Shakespeare intended to impersonate in Hamlet not a mere metaphysical entity, but a man of flesh and blood: yet it is certainly curious how prophetically typical the character is of that introversion of mind which is so constant a phenomenon of these latter days, of that over-consciousness which wastes itself in analyzing the motives of action instead of acting.

The old painters had a rule, that all compositions should be pyramidal in form—a central figure, from which the others slope gradually away on the two sides. Shakespeare probably had never heard of this rule, and, if he had, would not have been likely to respect it more than he has the so-called classical unities of time and place. But he understood perfectly the artistic advantages of gradation, contrast, and relief. Taking Hamlet as the key-note, we find in him weakness of character which, on the one hand, is contrasted with the feebleness that springs from overweening conceit in Polonius and with frailty of temperament in Ophelia, while, on the other hand, it is brought into fuller relief by the steady force of Horatio and the impulsive violence of Laertes,

who is resolute from thoughtlessness, just as Hamlet is irresolute from overplus of thought.

If we must draw a moral from Hamlet, it would seem to be that Will is Fate, and that, Will once abdicating, the inevitable successor in the regency is Chance. Had Hamlet acted, instead of musing how good it would be to act, the King might have been the only victim. As it is, all the main actors in the story are the fortuitous sacrifice of his irresolution. We see how a single great vice of character at last draws to itself as allies and confederates all other weaknesses of the man, as in civil wars the timid and the selfish wait to throw themselves upon the stronger side :

“ In Life’s small things be resolute and great.

To keep thy muscles trained : know’st thou when Fate

Thy measure takes ? or when she’ll say to thee,

‘ I find thee worthy, do this thing for me ’ ? ”

THE
*MECHANISM OF VITAL ACTIONS.**

THE appearance of Professor Draper's ingenious and original treatise on "Physiology" must call the attention of a large class of readers to those higher questions of the science which are freely discussed in its pages. The scientific and literary character of the work has been made the subject of special notice in various other quarters. It is agreed that Professor Draper has given us a book that is full of interest, containing many striking views and novel experimental illustrations. Its faults spring out of its merits, and are such as belong to most works of science written by men of lively imagination. We make our sincere acknowledgments

* Published July, 1857.

1. Human Physiology, Statical and Dynamical; or the Conditions and Course of the Life of Man. By John William Draper, M. D., LL. D., Professor of Chemistry and Physiology in the University of New York. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1856. 8vo. Pp. 649.

2. The Mutual Relations of the Vital and Physical Forces. By William B. Carpenter, M. D., Examiner in Physiology and Comparative Anatomy in the University of London. From the "Philosophical Transactions," Part II., for 1850. London. 1850. 4to. Pp. 37.

3. The Correlation of Physical Forces. By W. R. Grove, M. A., F. R. S., Barrister-at-Law. Second edition. London. 1850. 8vo. Pp. 119.

4. Caloric; its Mechanical, Chemical, and Vital Agencies in the Phenomena of Nature. By Samuel L. Metcalfe, M. D., of Transylvania University. London. 1843. 2 vols. 8vo. Pp. 1,100.

to the author for the fresh contributions he has furnished to our knowledge of the laws of life, and the new impulse he has imparted to the study of its mysteries.

We have prefixed to this paper the titles of two essays, published within the last few years, and also of a ponderous volume which saw the light before either of them, and has been, or seems to have been, less read than either. Mr. Grove's essay has excited great attention in England, and received the honors of translation into the French language. Dr. Carpenter's paper, published in the "*Philosophical Transactions*," extended the generalizations of Mr. Grove into the domain of Physiology. Both are brief, and are therefore read. Dr. Metcalfe forgot the motto which he must have often seen quoted from D'Alembert: "The author kills himself in spinning out what the reader kills himself in cutting short." Consequently his book has been shelved, in spite of its originality and learning. But we must do our countryman the justice to say that, if there is anything in the physical theory of vital actions which has found advocates in Mr. Newport and Dr. Carpenter, and which Professor Draper has so forcibly illustrated, Dr. Metcalfe has anticipated them all in maintaining that caloric "is alone, of every form of being, quick or dead, the active principle"; the same doctrine, modernized, which, in another form, was taught by Hippocrates. And we must be permitted to express our astonishment that a work of such pretensions, published in London, should be ignored by any English writer of authority, while he is repeating and developing its leading ideas, long since given to the world.

We do not propose to make a critical examination of any of these publications. We only avail ourselves of them for

the purpose of opening one of the questions which all of them suggest or discuss. This is the relation existing between the physical agencies of general nature and the peculiar manifestations of living beings. The interest of physiologists was especially called to this subject by the well-known lectures of Professor Matteucci, delivered in the University of Pisa, by appointment of the Tuscan Government, in 1844. A translation of these lectures was introduced to the English public under the auspices of Dr. Pereira and Professor Faraday. From that time, the questions involved in the comparison of living and lifeless nature have attracted more and more attention, until they have become, in a measure, blended with popular studies. We propose to select one subdivision of this vast subject for such discussion as may not be unfitted for the eye of the unprofessional student of nature.

If the reader of this paper live another complete year, his self-conscious principle will have migrated from its present tenement to another, the raw materials, even, of which are not as yet put together. A portion of that body of his which is to be will ripen in the corn of the next harvest. Another portion of his future person he will purchase, or others will purchase for him, headed up in the form of certain barrels of potatoes. A third fraction is yet to be gathered in a Southern rice-field. The limbs with which he is then to walk will be clad with flesh borrowed from the tenants of many stalls and pastures, now unconscious of their doom. The very organs of speech with which he is to talk so wisely, or plead so eloquently, or preach so effectively, must first serve his humbler brethren to bleat, to bellow, and for all the varied utterances of bristled or feathered barn-yard life.

His bones themselves are, to a great extent, *in posse*, and not *in esse*. A bag of phosphate of lime which he has ordered from Professor Mapes, for his grounds, contains a large part of what is to be his next year's skeleton. And, more than all this, as by far the greater part of his body is nothing, after all, but water, the main substance of his scattered members is to be looked for in the reservoir, in the running streams, at the bottom of the well, in the clouds that float over his head, or diffused among them all.

For a certain period, then, the permanent human being is to use the temporary fabric made up of these shifting materials. So long as they are held together in human shape, they manifest certain properties which fit them for the use of a self-conscious and self-determining existence. But it is as absurd to suppose any identification of this existence with the materials which it puts on and off, as to suppose the hand identified with the glove it wears, or the sponge with the various fluids which may in succession fill its pores. Our individual being is in no sense approximated to a potato by living on that esculent for a few months; and if we study the potato while it forms a part of our bodies under the name of brain or muscle, we shall learn no more of the true nature of our self-determining consciousness than if we studied the same tuber in the hill where it grew.

These forms of nutritive matter that pass through our systems in a continual round may be observed, weighed, tested, analyzed, tortured in a thousand ways, without our touching for a moment the higher problem of our human existence. Sooner or later, according to the perfection of our methods and instruments, we bring hard up against a deaf, dumb, blind fact. The microscope reaches a granule,

and there it stops. Chemistry finds a few bodies which it can not decompose, and plays with them as with so many dominos, counting and matching equivalents as our old friends of the Café Procope used to count and match the spots on their humbler playthings. But why C, O, H, have such a tendency to come together, and why, when they have come together, a fluid ounce of the resulting compound will make the small philosopher as great as a king for an hour or two, and give him the usual headache which crowns entail upon their wearers, the next morning, is not written in the pages of Lehmann, nor treasured in the archives of Poggendorf. Experimental physiology teaches how to stop the wheels of the living machinery, and sometimes how to start them when their action is checked; but no observation from the outside ever did or ever will approach the mystery of that most intense of all realities—our relations, as responsible agents, to right and wrong. It will never answer, by aid of microscope, or balance, or scalpel, that ever-recurring question—

“Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?”

The study of physical and physiological phenomena has been thought to lead to what is called materialism, or something worse. In spite of Galen's half-Christian religious eloquence—in spite of Haller's defense of the faith, and of Boerhaave's apostolic piety—we can not forget the old saying that where there are three physicians there are two atheists. It would be almost as fair to say that where there are three bank-clerks there are two rogues. Unquestionably, the handling of large sums of money betrays into dis-

honesty some men who would have resisted slighter temptations. So the exclusive study of the bodily functions may, now and then, lead away a weak mind from the contemplation of the spiritual side of nature. The mind, like the eye, has its adjustment to near and remote objects. A watchmaker can find the broken tooth in a ship's chronometer quicker than the captain, and the captain will detect a sail in the distance long before the artisan can see it. Physiologists and metaphysicians look at the same objects with different focal adjustments; but if they deny the truths out of their own immediate range, their eyes have got the better of their judgment. If the mariner will not trust his chronometer to the expert, he loses his reckoning; if the nice-fingered myope should play sailor, the pirate would be sure to catch him. Our old, foolish proverb is not, therefore, wholly without its meaning. Charlatans in physiology, who are not so likely to be found in any other profession as in the one mentioned, make the mistake of confounding the results derived from their observation of the working of certain instruments, in health or disease, with those that claim another and a more exalted source. Our convictions, even without special divine illumination, reveal us to ourselves, not as machines, but as subcreative centers of intelligence and power. The two ranges of mental vision should never be confounded for good or for bad. The laws of the organism can not be projected, *a priori*, on the strength of the profoundest intuitions. Hunter's maxim, "Don't think, but try," comes down like a pile-driver on the audacious head possessed by the delusion that it can find out how things are by abstract speculation upon the question how they ought to be. But, on the other hand, the doctrine of an

immortal spirit will never come from the dissecting-room or the laboratory, unless it is first carried thither from a higher sphere. Yet there is nothing in these workshops that can efface it, any more than their gases and exhalations can blot out the stars of heaven.

Thus what we have to say must be considered as applying solely to the living body, and not to the divine emanation which, in the human form, seems, but only seems, to identify itself for a while with the shape it uses. We shall not even think it necessary to consider the living body in all its attributes. Animals have a life in common with plants; they grow, they keep their condition, they decay; they reproduce their kind, they perish; and these acts, apart from self-consciousness or any voluntary agency, constitute them living creatures. This simplest and broadest aspect of living nature is that which we propose to consider.

Life may be contemplated either as a condition, manifested by a group of phenomena, or as the cause of that condition. Looked at as a condition, it is the active state peculiar to an organism, vegetable or animal, which consists in the maintenance of structural integrity by a constant interchange of elements with surrounding matter. This interchange is effected under the influence of certain exciting agencies, or stimuli, such as light and heat, which are essential to its due performance. An egg or a seed perishing undeveloped has never been excited into this active state, and therefore can not be said to have lived. It was only for a time capable of living, if the proper stimuli and surrounding matters had been present.

But life may be considered, again, as a *cause* of the phenomena just referred to, and it is in this aspect that we

mean to regard it; and, before attempting to examine our special question, we must remember the limits of all our inquiries with reference to causation. We can hope for nothing more, in the way of positive increase of knowledge, than these results in any such inquiry: to detect the constant antecedents of any condition or change; to resolve one or more antecedents into consequents of some previous fact; to show that one or more of the causative elements are the same that are productive of other effects; and, lastly, to reproduce the effect by supplying the causative conditions, or to prove the nature of the constant antecedent by experiment. As to the essence of causation or of force, in any of its aspects, we are no wiser than Newton, the profoundest student of its laws, and the readiest to confess his ignorance of its intimate nature.

Let us look first at the theological relations of an inquiry into the causes and nature of life. These, if nothing else, may, we think, be satisfactorily adjusted.

Every action, or series of actions, is referred by the mind to a force, and this again to a power. Thus the action of a clock is referred to the force of the spring, and this force is the manifestation of a power stored in the spring by winding it up, and set free by giving the first swing to the pendulum. We may consider action as the specific application of force; force as the transfer of power, or power *in transitu*; power itself as the original or delegated source of being, or of change in its condition. Thus life, which appears as a series of actions, is referred to a force commonly called vital, and this to a power, having its center in the Divine Being; for all who recognize a Divinity are agreed that all power comes from him. This is what they mean

when they call omnipotence one of his attributes. The first manifestations of force are habitually referred to the same original source. Thus we say that the Creator gave motion to the planets in space, taking it for granted that the Master-hand alone could impart their original impulse. If, however, we are asked why they continue to roll on, we are told that the *vis inertiae* keeps them from stopping. But this is a mere name, and we might as well say that the *vis motus* starts a planet, as that the *vis inertiae* keeps it going. A simpler statement is that the Divine agency, once in operation, never changes without cause. We can not allow force to be self-sustaining any more than self-originating, nor matter itself to be self-subsistent any more than self-creating. "Actualia dependent a Deo tum in existendo, tum in agendo. . . . Neque male docetur conservationem divinam esse continuatam creationem, ut radius continue a sole prodit." Such are the words of Leibnitz. The apparent uniformity of force, and the seeming independent existence of matter, lead us to speak of them as if their laws, as we term them, were absolutely and eternally inherent. But a law which an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Being enforces, is plainly nothing more than the Lawgiver himself at work. This is the meaning of that somewhat startling utterance of Oken, "The universe is God rotating." Transcendental Physiology is beginning to steal from the hymn-books :

" With glory clad, with strength arrayed,
The Lord, that o'er all nature reigns,
The world's foundations strongly laid, ,
And the vast fabric still sustains."

So sang Tate and Brady, paraphrasing the royal David.

And Watts, still more expressly, in the hymn made famous by "the harp of thousand strings":

" His Spirit moves our heaving lungs,
Or they would breathe no more."

Once giving in our complete adhesion to the doctrine of the "immanent Deity," we get rid of many difficulties in the way of speculative inquiry into the nature and origin of things. This may be an important preliminary. Mr. Newport, the very distinguished physiological anatomist, communicated a paper to the Linnæan Society, in the year 1845, "On the Natural History of the Oil Beetle, *Meloë*." It contained the following sentence: "The facts I have now detailed lead me, in conformity with the discovery by Faraday of the analogy of light with heat, magnetism, and electricity, to regard light as the primary source of all vital and instinctive power, the degrees and variations of which may, perhaps, be referred to modifications of this influence on the special organization of each animal body." The Council of the Society objected to the publication of the passage from which this is extracted. The Society's "Index Expurgatorius" would have been more complete if it had included the "Invocation" of the third book of "Paradise Lost," which has hitherto escaped the Anglican censorship.

But if the student of nature and the student of divinity can once agree that all the forces of the universe, as well as all its power, are immediately dependent upon its Creator—that he is not only *omnipotent*, but *omnimotent*—we have no longer any fear of nebular theories, or doctrines of equivocal generation, or of progressive development. If we saw a new planet actually formed in the field of the telescope, or

the imaginary "*Acarus Crossii*" put together "*de toutes pièces*" under the microscope, true to its alleged pedigree—out of *Silex*, by *Galvanism*—it would no more turn us into atheists than a sight of the mint would make us doubt the national credit.

We are ready, therefore, to examine the mystery of life with the same freedom that we should carry into the examination of any other problem; for it is only a question of what mechanism is employed in its evolution and sustenance.

We begin, then, by examining the general rules which the Creator seems to have prescribed to his own operations. We ask, in the first place, whether he is wont, so far as we know, to employ a great multitude of materials, patterns, and forces, or whether he has seen fit to accomplish many different ends by the employment of a few of these only.

In all our studies of external nature, the tendency of increasing knowledge has uniformly been to show that the rules of creation are simplicity of material, economy of inventive effort, and thrift in the expenditure of force. All the endless forms in which matter presents itself to us are resolved by chemistry into some threescore supposed simple substances, some of these, perhaps, being only modifications of the same element. The shapes of beasts and birds, of reptiles and fishes, vary in every conceivable degree; yet a single vertebra is the pattern and representation of the framework of them all, from eels to elephants. The identity reaches still further—across a mighty gulf of being—but bridges it over with a line of logic as straight as a sunbeam, and as indestructible as the scimeter-edge that spanned the chasm in the fable of the Indian Hades. Strange as it may

sound, the tail which the serpent trails after him in the dust and the head of Plato were struck in the die of the same primitive conception, and differ only in their special adaptation to particular ends. Again, the study of the movements of the universe has led us from their complex phenomena to the few simple forces from which they flow. The falling apple and the rolling planet are shown to obey the same tendency. The stick of sealing-wax that draws a feather to it, is animated by the same impulse that convulses the stormy heavens.

These generalizations have simplified our view of the grandest material operations, yet we do not feel that creative power and wisdom have been shorn of any single ray by the demonstrations of Newton or of Franklin. On the contrary, the larger the collection of seemingly heterogeneous facts we can bring under the rule of a single formula, the nearer we feel that we have reached toward the source of knowledge, and the more perfectly we trace that little arc of the immeasurable circle which comes within the range of our hasty observations, at first like the broken fragments of a many-sided polygon, but at last as a simple curve that incloses all we know or can know of nature. To our own intellectual wealth, the gain is like that of the overburdened traveler, who should exchange hundred-weights of iron for ounces of gold. Evanescent, formless, unstable, impalpable, a fog of uncondensed experiences hovers over our consciousness like an atmosphere of uncombined gases. One spark of genius shoots through it, and its elements rush together and glitter before us in a single translucent drop. It would hardly be extravagant to call science the art of packing knowledge.

We are moving in the right direction, therefore, when we summon all the agencies of nature before the tribunal of Science, and try the question of their identity under their various aliases, just so often as a new set of masks or disguises is detected in their possession. The accumulated discoveries of late years have resulted in such a trial. Following the same course that Newton and Franklin followed in their generalizations, living philosophers have attempted to show relations of mutual convertibility, if not of identity, between the series of forces known as light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and chemical affinity. Some leading facts indicating their intimate relationship may be very briefly recalled.

A body heated to a certain point becomes luminous; its heat seems to pass over partly into the condition of light. Thus iron becomes *red-hot* at about $1,000^{\circ}$ Fahrenheit. Light may, perhaps, be changed into, or manifest itself as, heat. In Franklin's famous experiment, the black cloth, which absorbs all the luminous rays, sinks deepest into the snow. Light, again, may act chemically, as heat does, as we see in the results of photography. It may be fixed in a body, like heat, as is shown in the Bologna phosphorus, which shines for some minutes after being exposed to sunlight, or to the common light of day. Heat develops electricity, as in the various thermo-electric combinations of different metals. Electricity produces light, and sets fire to combustibles. The highest magnetic powers are developed in iron by the action of galvanic electricity. The magnet, again, is made to give galvanic shocks in a common form of battery, with the usual manifestations of light and heat. Chemical force develops light, heat, and electricity; and each of these

is used constantly in the laboratory as a practical means of inducing chemical action. Heat alone is shown, by an experiment of Mr. Grove, to be capable of decomposing water. Further than this, as all forms of motion are capable of developing heat, or light, or electricity, according to the conditions under which it occurs, and as heat and electricity and chemical changes are habitually used to produce motion, it is questioned whether all the apparent varieties of force are not mutually convertible, there being in reality but one kind of force, which manifests itself in each of the different modes just spoken of according to the material substratum through which it is passing, or some other modifying cause. And as there are facts indicating the existence of a system of equivalents as prevailing in these conversions, or of a fixed ratio between the various convertible forms of force, so that a given electrical force will produce just so much heat or chemical decomposition, and either of these reproduce the original amount of electricity, it has been maintained that the total force of the inorganic universe is undergoing perpetual transfer, but never changes in amount, any more than the matter of the universe is altered in quantity by change of form.

This would be the noblest of generalizations, could we accept it without limit as an established truth : a few simple elements—the material world formed by their innumerable combinations ; one force, an effluence from the central power of creation, animating all—binding atoms, guiding systems, illuminating, warming, renewing, dissolving, as it passes through the various media of which the unbreathing universe is made up.

We may carry the generalization a step further. We know

nothing of matter itself except as a collection of localized forces, points of attraction and repulsion, as Boscovich expressed his notion of its elements. Take a quartz crystal as an example. It resists the passage of certain other forces through a limited portion of space. It resists the separation of that sphere of resistance into two or more parts, by means of what we call cohesion. If a ray of light attempts to pass the portion of space within which these circumscribed forces have been found to act, it is thrown back or bent from its course. Here, then, are localized forces, or agencies that produce change; the existence of anything behind them—substance or substratum—is a mere hypothesis. But while the fluent forces of the universe have been shown to pass more or less completely into one another, these collections of stationary forces which we call matter have hitherto maintained their ground against every attempt to reduce them to unity, or to render them in any degree mutually convertible. Our threescore groups of fixed forces, known as simple substances, defy all further analysis, so far as our present power and knowledge extend.

But we must remember that, even if the hypothesis of the absolute unity of the various imponderable agencies were established as a fact, we should still have to look somewhere between their sources and our organs for the difference in their manifestations. And this could be only in the media through which they act. If electricity becomes magnetic attraction in passing through iron, and iron only, we must look to the metal for the cause of its change of form. Thus we only transfer the differentiating agency from one sphere to another, in consequence of the experimental inferences of the physicist and the chemist. If chemistry had reduced

matter to some one mother-element, we should have been forced to refer all its different manifestations, such as gold, sulphur, oxygen, and the rest, to the influence of external agencies operating through them. The tendency of modern research, without claiming for its inferences the character of demonstration, is in the other direction : unity of the fluent forces ; diversity of the fixed forces, or matter.

Such are the data derived from the inorganic world with which we approach the consideration of the phenomena that belong to organized beings. According to their analogies we should look for the cause of any peculiar manifestation we might meet with in the fixed forces or material structure of the organism.

When we commence the examination of this material structure, we find it so different from everything that we have met with in lifeless matter, that we are tempted to believe it must differ no less in elementary composition. The substance of these five hundred mute slaves that we call muscles, and the currents of this "running flesh" that we call blood, seem unlike anything in earth, air, or waters. But Chemistry meets us with her all-searching analysis, and tells us that this solid and this fluid, and all the other structures of the body, however varied in aspect, are but combinations of a few elements which we know well in the laboratories of Nature and Art. A few gallons of water, a few pounds of carbon and of lime, some cubic feet of air, an ounce or two of phosphorus, a few drachms of iron, a dash of common salt, a pinch of sulphur, a grain or more of each of several hardly essential ingredients, and we have man, according to Berzelius and Liebig. We have literally "weighed Hannibal," or his modern representative, and are ready to answer Ju-

venal's question. The wisest brain, the fairest face, and the strongest arm before or since Ulysses and Helen and Agamemnon, were or are made up of these same elements, not twenty in number, and scarcely a third of the simple substances known to the chemist. The test-tube, and the crucible, and the balance that "cavils on the ninth part of a hair," have settled that question. Appearances, therefore, have proved deceptive with regard to the composition of the organism.

Again, if we looked for the first time at the mode of action of the living structure, we should probably decide that the forces at work to produce the operations we observe must be of an essentially different nature from those which we see manifested in brute matter. Here are solids sustained and fluids lifted against the force of gravity. Here is heat generated without fire. Here is bread turned into flesh. Here is a glairy and oily fluid shut up in a tight casket, sealed by Nature as carefully as the last will and testament of an heirless monarch; and lo! what the casket holds is juggled into blood, bone, marrow, flesh, feathers, by the aid of a little heat, which, increased a few degrees, might give us an omelet instead of a chicken. Surely, we should say, here must be new forces, unknown to the common forms of matter. Yet appearances may deceive us, as they deceived us respecting the substance of the organism until the chemist set us right.

We must try the actions just as he has tried the elements. We are not bound to do for them any more than he has done for the materials he has worked upon. If he has stopped at analysis, and confessed that synthesis is beyond his powers, so may we. He has shown us the carbon, the

iron, and the other elements of which blood and muscular fiber are made up. But he has never made a drop of blood or a fiber of muscle. We have done as much for physiological analysis, if we can show that such or such a living action is produced by some form of natural force with which we are acquainted as it appears in inorganic matter, although we can not reproduce the living action by artificial contrivances. It is not to be supposed that the laboratory can present combining elements to one another under all the conditions furnished by the organism, nor that any one living act should be imitated after the mutually interdependent round of movements has been permanently interrupted.

Proceeding, then, to our analysis of the living actions, a very superficial examination shows us that many of the physical agencies are manifested in the organism in the same way as in ordinary matter. Thus gravity is always at work to drag us down to the earth. It holds us spread out on the nurse's lap in infancy. We stand up against it for some three or four score years. Then it pulls us slowly downward again. The biped is forced to become a triped. The jaw falls by its own weight, and must continually be lifted again ; so that old men, as Haller remarked, seem to be constantly chewing. It stretches us out at last, and flattens the earth over our bones, and so has done with us. Our fluids obey it during our whole lives. The veins of the legs dilate in tall men who stand much ; the hands blanch if we hold them up ; the face reddens if we stoop. The same cohesion that gives strength to knife-handles and tenacity to bow-strings serves the purposes of life in bones and sinews. The valves of the heart and vessels, which pointed Harvey to the discovery of the circulation, proclaim the obedience of the

fluids to the laws of hydraulics. The tear-passages are filled by the force of capillary attraction. The skin soaks up fluids and allows them to escape through it, as membranes and films of paper and sheets of unglazed porcelain do in our experiments. The chemical reactions between the blood and the atmosphere, and between the gastric juice and the food, may be imitated very successfully out of the body. The eye and the ear recognize the ordinary laws of light and sound in all their arrangements. Levers, pulleys, and even the wheel and axle, play their usual part in the passive transfer of the forces that move the living machinery.

These facts, and many others of similar character which might be mentioned, point to the following conclusion: If there is a special force acting in the living organism, it must exist in addition to the general forces of nature, and not as a substitute for them. To know whether such a special force is necessary, or whether the general forces of nature are sufficient, we must know what these last are capable of doing, and what they can not do, and must compare their ascertained power and its limitations with the living task to be performed. This is the next point to be examined.

That form of force which we call chemical affinity is capable of giving an indefinite number of aspects and qualities to matter, by varying the proportions and mode of combination of a few simple elements. Oxygen and nitrogen, which are the breath of our nostrils, become a corrosive fluid when united in certain simple proportions differing from those of atmospheric air. The same elements, in varied combinations, serve us as food, or form a fluid, one drop of which kills almost like a stroke of lightning. Thus there is

nothing exceptional in the fact that the compounds of the vegetable or animal structure should present the distinctive characters by which we know them as starch or fat, as fiber or muscle.

Neither does there appear to be anything in the mere fact of assimilation which establishes a distinct line of demarkation between the living and the lifeless world. A crystal, from a solution containing several salts, appropriates just the materials adapted to build up its own substance. A lichen does nothing more. The air is a solution of the elements that form it, and it appropriates and fixes them. The penetration of the new materials into the organic structure, and their interstitial distribution among its parts, might seem to draw the line of distinction. But this is very limited in many plants, and depends on their mechanical arrangement, one division growing upon the outside and another upon the inside. The porosity of organized beings which favors this mode of nutrition is nothing but an increase of internal surface; soluble nutritive matters are diffused through their textures just as water and other fluids pass into the pores of the Spanish *alcarraza*; and there is no reason why this internal surface should not appropriate new matter, as well as the external surface of a mineral.

The constancy of specific form is not more absolute in organized beings than in crystals. The difference between different crystalline shapes of the same mineral is not greater than that of the grub and the butterfly, or of the floating and the fixed medusa.

Nor is a certain limitation of size a distinguishing mark of vitality. Some crystals are microscopic, some needle-like, some columnar. No diamond was ever found too

heavy for a lady's coronet; but there are beryls which it would break a man's back to carry.

The plant and the animal have been thought to be peculiar in maintaining their integrity by continual waste and renewal. They are a perpetual "whirlpool," into which new matter is constantly passing, and from which the materials that have been used are always being thrown out. It might at first seem hard to match this condition by any fact from the inorganic world. But, from time immemorial, life has been compared to a flame, a spark, a torch, a candle:

"Et, quasi cursores, vitæ lampada tradunt."

The inverted flambeau of the ancients is still a frequent symbol in our rural cemeteries. Macbeth, Othello, John of Gaunt, have made the image familiar to us in different forms:

"My oil-dried lamp, and time-bewasted light,
Shall be extinct with age and endless night."

The simile is in fact a little fatigued with long use, and the Humane Society is hardly true to its name when it tolerates the expression that "the vital spark was extinct." But this is the very object of comparison that we here want, not for ornament but use. Professor Draper has beautifully drawn the parallel between the flame and the plant. The flame is not living, yet it grows; it is fed by incessant waste and supply; and it dies at length, exhausted, clogged, or suddenly quenched. The plant must suck up fluid by its wick-like roots, as well as the lamp by its root-like wick. The leaves must let it evaporate, as does the alcohol in an unprotected spirit-lamp. Here, then, is the mechanism of per-

petual interstitial change, which we have a right to say may be purely physical in the one case, as in the other.

We need not wonder, in view of this perpetual change of material, that the living body, as a whole, resists decomposition. The striking picture drawn by Cuvier in his introduction to the "Comparative Anatomy," in which the living loveliness of youthful beauty is contrasted with the fearful changes which a few hours will make in the lifeless form, loses its apparent significance when we remember the necessary consequence of the arrest of its interior movements. The living body is like a city kept sweet by drains running underground to every house, into which the water that supplies the wants of each household is constantly sweeping its refuse matters. The dead body is the same city, with its drains choked and its aqueducts dry. The individual system, like the mass of collective life that constitutes a people, is continually undergoing interstitial decomposition. If we take in a ton every twelvemonth, in the shape of food, drink, and air, and get rid of only a quarter of it unchanged into our own substance, we die ten times a year—not all of us at any one time, but a portion of us at every moment. It is a curious consequence of this, we may remark by the way, that if the refuse of any of our great cities were properly economized, its population would eat itself over and over again in the course of every generation. We consume nothing. Our food is like those everlasting pills that old pharmacopœias tell of, heirlooms for the *dura ilia* of successive generations. But we change what we receive, first into our own substance, then into waste matter; and we have no evidence that any single portion of the body resists decompo-

sition longer during life than after death. Only, all that decays is at once removed while the living state continues.

As for our inability, already referred to, to imitate most of the organic compounds, it is no more remarkable than our inability to manufacture precious stones. Some combinations take place readily; others require the most delicately adjusted conditions. Potassium and oxygen rush into each other's arms like true lovers. Iron blushes a tardier consent before changing its maiden name for oxide. The "noble metals" are coy to the great elemental wooer; they must be tampered with by go-betweens before they will yield. Chlorine and hydrogen unite with a violent explosion, if exposed to sunlight. Hydrogen and oxygen resist the mediation of the sunbeams, but come together with sudden vehemence if crossed by the electric spark or touched by a flame. Most bodies must be dissolved before they will form alliances; "*corpora non agunt nisi soluta.*" Some can combine only in the nascent state; like princes, they must be betrothed in their cradles. There is nothing strange, then, in the fact that combinations formed in the vegetable or animal laboratory should be hard to imitate out of the body. Yet the chemist has already succeeded in forming urea; and artificial digestive fluids, borrowing nothing from life but a bit of dried and salted rennet, do their work quite as well as the gastric juice of many dyspeptic professors. These instances show us that, if we can only supply the necessary conditions, the chemical forces are always ready. Nature expects every particle of carbon, and the rest, to do its duty under all circumstances. The digestive secretions often devour the stomach after death. A drowned man is restored by artificial respiration; the air forced into the

lungs changes the blood in their capillary vessels; the blood thus changed is enabled to flow more freely; the heart is unloaded of its stagnant contents, and roused to action; the round of vital acts is once more set in motion; and all this because carbon and oxygen are always true to each other.

We are obliged to confess, as the result of this examination, that the inherent and inalienable relations of the elements found in the living organism may be sufficient to account for all the acts of composition and decomposition observed during life, without invoking that special "*chimie vivante*" which Broussais and others have supposed to be one of the properties of organization.

There is another mode of operation found in animals and vegetables, which has been considered as depending upon special *vital*, in distinction from physical, causes. This is the process by which certain bodies are selected from others for absorption or secretion; as when the chyle is taken up by the lacteals, and the bile is separated from the blood by the liver. To account for this, the organs have been supposed to possess a certain "low intelligence," which directs them in this selection. Yet there is evidence that the ordinary physical laws are not idle in these operations, and it is fair to ask if they may not be the only real agencies. The lacteals will not take up oily matters until they have been turned into an emulsion by the pancreatic fluid; just as a wick wetted with water will not take up oil until this is emulsified, or made a soap of.

We may still inquire why each secreting gland forms or transmits its own special product, and no other; why the liver secretes only bile, and the lachrymal gland only tears. We can see nothing in the anatomical formation of these

organs to account for their peculiar modes of action. But there are many phenomena of simple physical transudation equally unexplained. When water and alcohol are separated by a membrane, a current is established between the fluids in both directions, that from the water to the alcohol—the denser to the lighter—being the most rapid. When a similar experiment is performed with sirup and water, the current is from the water to the sirup—the lighter to the denser. When the same fluids are employed, the nature and position of the membrane used occasion differences which we can not explain. With the skin of a frog, the current from the water is most rapid when the internal surface is toward the alcohol. But, with an eel-skin, the reversed position is most favorable to the flow in the same direction.

Again, in the phenomena of precipitation, as seen in the laboratory, we have an illustration of the chemical side of secretion. Two clear fluids are mixed, and one of them immediately separates or secretes one or more of its elements as a distinct product; or both may be decomposed with entire transformation of aspect and properties. Or a simple solid substance is introduced into a fluid compound, and at once seizes upon some constituent, and appropriates it, as when iron is immersed in solutions of salts of copper. Still more striking is the well-known action of spongy platinum in producing the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, without undergoing any chemical change itself.

Let us see whether some of these same physical operations may not be manifested in the liver, taking this as the typical secreting organ. Its cell-walls may govern their currents of transudation by laws of their own, as eel-skins and frog-skins govern the currents of alcohol and water.

The two kinds of blood that meet in its capillary vessels may react upon each other, and produce mutual decomposition, as well as any other compound fluids. The substance of the liver has as much right to appropriate fat, without a special license from vitality, as the iron, in the experiment referred to above, to appropriate copper. It may have as good a title from the Supreme Authority to join the elements that form cholesterine, as spongy platinum to unite hydrogen and oxygen. This catalytic agency—the priestly office of chemical nature that gives to one body the power of marrying innumerable pairs of loving atoms, itself standing apart in elemental celibacy—is not to be denied its possible place in the living mechanism. Its action may, perhaps, be more extended than in inanimate bodies. The instances furnished by the action of the pancreatic fluid and the gastric juice may belong to a far more numerous series of similar phenomena. We may grant a difference of degree between the separations or secretions effected by the reactions between the complex elements of the organism and those witnessed in unorganized matter; but the difference of essential nature is less easily demonstrated.

But it will be said that the several parts select their special secretions with reference to the general wants of the system. If there is no evidence of adaptation of parts to a whole anywhere except in living beings, then we must allow that here is a difference in kind as well as in degree, which it would be hard to reconcile with the supposition that the same forces are the sole agents in both cases. But it is vain to deny that the macrocosm shows the same adaptation of parts as the microcosm. When the *Resolute* was found adrift and boarded by the American sailors, there was no

sail on her masts, and no hand at her helm. Yet there was just as much evidence in her build and equipments that she was framed and provided for a definite purpose as if the good ship had been seen with all her men at the ropes and the steersman at the wheel, following a lead into the ice-fields of the North. So if the earth had been visited by some wandering spirit before a fern had spread its leaves, or a trilobite had clashed his scales, the evidence of adaptation of its several parts to one another, as well as to ulterior ends, would have been clear as the sun that shone upon its primeval strata. Its steady circuit through the heavens, exposing it on all sides to light and shade in succession; the qualities of matter that lead its various forms to arrange themselves as shapeless matrix, or geometrical solid, into ever downward-sinking waters and ever upward-rising atmospheres; the self-preserving and self-classifying tendency, constantly at work to educe new harmonies out of the destroying conflict of the active powers of nature—show that the adaptation of parts to the whole is wider than the realm and older than the reign of life.

All the physical laws, in and out of the organism, are arranged in harmony with one another. Each organ of a plant or an animal is supported by and accountable to the general system. But this system holds the same relations to the surrounding universe. Every creature that is born has an account opened at once with Nature—debtor by so much of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, azote; creditor by so much carbonic acid and ammonia, or whatever may be the medium of payment. Life is adapted to maintain a certain normal composition of the atmosphere, as much as the atmosphere to maintain life. And as air existed before plant or animal

lived to breathe it, and as air is made up of at least three elements, each of these, considered as a part, was adjusted in quality and quantity to the whole with the same fitness that we see in the relation of the amount and quality of the bile as compared with the other secretions and the wants of the system.

But the living system protects itself by special provisions, it will be said ; look at the thickened cuticle upon the workman's hand, and see how admirably it shields the sensitive surface. True ; and see also how delightfully the same thickened cuticle acts in the case of a *corn*. The avidity with which the most deadly substances are sucked in by the skin—the suddenness with which a single drop of poison will work its way through the system from the surface of a mucous membrane—shows us that the same force acts for good or bad indifferently ; that is, it is under the general law of harmony, but not modified to meet accidental conditions. Just so in the greater universe, the tide rises by one of its beneficent provisions, wafting a hundred fleets into their harbors, but not less surely drowning the poor wretches who are caught on the sands by its advancing waters. “Faugh a ballagh !”—“Clear the coast !”—is the word when we get across the track of any natural agency. We must not expect it to turn out for any particular end ; the Creator has imparted no such wisdom to matter.

The course of a single ray of light is the eternal illustration of the Divine mode of action. It is always in straight lines. The difference between our utilitarian methods, always looking to special ends, and the Supreme handling of things in their universal aspect, is beautifully shown in the structure of one of our domestic animals. If a watchmaker

should insist on putting into a common watch one little wheel, unseen, and unconnected with the rest of the machinery, because he had made repeaters which required such a wheel, we should smile at his lost labor. But there is a little collar-bone, too small to be of any use, floating in the midst of the muscles about a cat's shoulder, which is as constant as if the animal's welfare depended upon it. Why is it there? It is the vanishing point of a series of models formed on one general plan. The plan, as a whole, is a monument of infinite wisdom, adapted to the various needs of a numerous series of conscious beings. But it is so vast that it includes what we call *utility* as one of its accidents, and this anatomical fact shows us one of the borders at which the Divine conception overlaps the temporary application. The human artisan is wise in leaving out the wheel when it is no longer wanted. But the seemingly trivial arrangement just mentioned shows that the Deity respects a normal type more than a practical fact. His thoughts and his ways are not as ours.

The limited duration of existence might be thought to be characteristic of organic being. But, in the first place, this fact is not so universal and absolute as might be supposed. De Candolle long since promulgated the doctrine that trees live indefinitely, and never die but from injury or disease. The death of our great forest-trees is commonly owing to fracture, in consequence of the decay of the inner portion of the stem, which no longer performs any but a mechanical office. On the other hand, many crystals undergo decomposition, of form at least, within a longer or shorter period, by efflorescence or deliquescence. The very conditions of organic life imply a liability to disable its implements. A

river chokes up its own bed with detritus; a chimney fills itself up with soot. The organism is a multilocular sac of fluids that are loaded with dissolved and suspended matters. The smoke of life ascends from innumerable pores of animal bodies, from the first gasp to the last breath that is expelled. What marvel that the vessels become thickened, and the working organs clogged with accumulating deposits? We can only wonder, with the hymn to which we have referred, that the harmony of so exquisitely adjusted a mechanism should be so long maintained, and not at all at the brevity of life in any of its forms, or the diversity of its duration.

But there is the great mystery of reproduction. Are there any acts of inorganic nature parallel to those that take place in the development of an embryo of one of the higher animals? This development may be decomposed into the following separate elements: 1. A movement of assimilation imparted by an organism to a separable product of secretion or of growth; 2. A differentiating movement, which divides and arranges the formative materials into the substance of tissues and organs; 3. A modeling force, or shaping agency, which determines the form of the several parts and of the whole; 4. A coördinating force, which brings the various separate acts into harmony with one another, the *motus re-gius* of Lord Bacon.

Now, the question is, not whether all these actions are combined in any other known group of material changes than embryonic development, but whether any one of them is absolutely *sui generis*. And first, we do not see why molecular movements may not be imparted by one portion of matter to another, as well as movements in mass. Fire is so propagated, and forms a new center independent of its

origin. Magnetism is imparted from one body to another, without diminution of its intensity in the first. Secondly, the rending apart of the most intimately combined elements, and their distribution to the positive and negative poles respectively, may illustrate the separation of the several constituents of the embryonic structure from one another. A very weak current will decompose saline mixtures, and even refractory oxides. Heat alone, as we have seen, will decompose water. Is it not in harmony with these physical facts, that a weak current of heat, long continued, as in incubation, should induce the separation and *quasi*-polar arrangement of the loosely combined atoms that are to form the embryo? Thirdly, is not the shaping power more obvious in the rhombs of a fragment of Iceland spar than in the disk of a lichen, which falls on a stone and spreads just as a drop of rain would spread? We may, in fact, see the two forms of the modeling process—Nature's plane and spherical geometry—in operation side by side in the same structure. The *raphides*, or included crystals, which we often find in great abundance in vegetable cells—those of the onion, for instance—illustrate the point in question. Lastly, we have already seen cause to deny that the principle of harmony of parts, or multiplicity in unity, can be confined to living bodies, without overlooking the most obvious adjustments of the elements of general nature to one another and to one great plan. "The wonderful uniformity in the planetary system," says Newton, "must be allowed the effect of choice; and so must the uniformity in the bodies of animals."

It appears, from the survey we have taken, that we might expect, from the general character of the creative plan, that,

as preëxisting materials were employed to form organic structures, so preëxisting force or forces would be employed to maintain organic actions or unconscious life. It is certain that the materials of the organism are to a great extent subject to the common laws of mechanical and chemical forces. It is not proved that these same forces are incompetent to produce the whole series of interstitial changes in which the functions of life common to vegetables and animals consist. On the contrary, the more we vary our experiments and extend our observation, the more difficult we find the task of assigning limits to their power. The preservation of specific form and dimensions has not appeared to be confined to living beings. The coöperation of the parts of an organized structure does, indeed, imply a plan, or preëstablished harmony, but no more than the arrangement of the spheres or the relations of the elements to one another. Each little world of life shows only the same *solidarity*, on a small scale, that prevents the universe from being a chaos. Limits of duration are not peculiar to living beings, nor always evident in them. Reproduction combines several modes of action, no one of which is without its inorganic parallel.

Given, then, a plant or a man, there seems no good reason why either should not begin to live with all its might so soon as the conditions of light, heat, air—whatever stimuli or food it requires—shall be made to act upon it. Such is the case with the drowned man who is “brought to life.” He was defunct to all intents and purposes, except that the organs and fluids had not had time to become clogged or decomposed, when a whiff of air set the whole machinery going again. “Two is my number,” said Sir Charles Napier. “Two wives, two daughters, two sons, and *two deaths*. I

died at Corunna, and now the grim old villain approaches again." Life is not the absolute unit we suppose. If a man is dead who "breathes his last," or "expires," such dead men have unquestionably been restored to life without a miracle. In other words, a man may be dead conditionally—dead, unless there happen to be a double bellows or a galvanic battery in the neighborhood, and some one who knows how to use it. But if a man is not dead so long as any so-called living process goes on, then most men are buried alive; for there is no doubt that certain secretions—the mucous secretion among others, as one of our best pathologists thinks—take place for a considerable time after a person has "expired." Probably a certain number of those who have just died or expired could be resuscitated to movement, if not to consciousness, by artificial respiration, if it were a thing to be desired. The reason that they can not be permanently restored, like those rescued from the water, is that some organ or fluid has undergone an important injury in the vast majority of cases, if not in all.

Life is a necessary attribute, then, of a perfect organism exposed to the proper external influences, just as much as gravity belongs to a metal, or hardness to a diamond. Just as the Creator, in calling the material elements into existence, contemplated their fitness to form a part of the living creation yet to be, so did he also diffuse such forces, or forms of force, through the world as should of necessity manifest themselves through any perfect organism as what we call life. Such is the conclusion pointed at by the range of analogies we have adduced. A vast number of facts testify in its favor, and it is hard to find any that oppose it which can not be explained. Whatever incomprehensible mystery there

may have been in the first fabrication of these living time-keepers that measure ages in their conscious or unconscious movements, one common key seems enough to wind them all up and set them going. We may not accept Mr. Newport's generalization as to light, but, whatever form of force we may recognize as the *primum mobile* in the series of organic movements, we are contented to accept as the chosen mode of action of the all-pervading Presence. If the Deity has seen fit to make one agent serve many purposes, the fact will be acquiesced in, in the face of the threatened San Benitos of all the Linnæan societies.

The battle-ground of atheism is not in the field of natural science; meaning by that the study of material phenomena. The argument from design to an intelligent contriver does not require the knowledge of Cuvier or Humboldt to make it satisfactory. Every man carries about with him in his own organization a syllogism which all the logic in the world can never mend. If his skepticism will not melt away in such an ocean of evidence, it is because it is insoluble. Whatever contrivances have been employed, the grand result of an immeasurable whole, all the parts of which are fitted together with a foresight and wisdom which it mocks the human intellect to attempt to sound, except along its shallower edges, remains to be accounted for, and Paley's argument from the watch to its maker illustrates the simple course of reasoning which the healthy mind is naturally forced to follow.

The evidence we have been considering applies to the perfect and mature organism, and does not reach the question how such organisms first came into being. Who shall tell us whether the first egg was parent or offspring of the

first fowl? The poet must answer for the philosopher. Milton has ventured to paraphrase the Scriptural account of creation with a freedom not always allowed to modern science. "The tepid caves, and fens, and shores" hatch their feathered broods from eggs. The grassy clods become the mothers of young cattle. The bees appear, not a single pair, but "swarming," as our own naturalists tell us they must have appeared. But our prosaic evidence as to the introduction of the forms of life upon our planet is limited.

And, first, there is no authentic evidence that the development of any organism has been directly observed without the demonstrated or probable presence of a germ derived from a previous structure having similar characters. Even the vexed question of the origin of the entozoa, or internal parasites, has received its approximate solution from modern investigations. The tape-worm, for instance, is found to exist in two different forms or stages of development. Each perfect tape-worm contains some twelve millions of eggs, capable of being reduced to a floating dust, and thus being deposited on various articles used as food. The mouse, nibbling at everything, swallows some of these, and they grow in his body into the state of *cystic worms*, an intermediate form of development only of late recognized as being a stage of the tape-worm's growth. By and by the cat eats the mouse, and the cystic worm, finding its proper habitat in this animal's alimentary canal, assumes the true proportions of the *tania crassicolis*. And so another cystic worm, which is common in the flesh of oxen, sheep, and especially pigs, becomes, by a similar metamorphosis, the *tania solium*, or long tape-worm of their human consumer. The tribes that live on raw flesh are said to be particularly subject to

the tape-worm. The hint derived from their experience may serve as an offset against Dr. Kane's Arctic experience, and the recommendation of a raw diet from nearer sources. So far as our immediate object is concerned, we have got rid of one enigma in finding not only the cradles but the nurseries of these entozoa. We are obliged to consign the supposed instances of equivocal generation derived from their history to the same category with Virgil's swarm of bees born from a decaying carcass.

But, in the second place, the evidence of geology has made it plain that new forms of life have been called into being at many different periods of the earth's history. The multitude of distinct floras and faunas in different regions and strata of the earth sufficiently proves that the formation of new organisms has been as much a part of the regular order of things in creation as the precession of the equinoxes, or upheavals and depressions, or any of those changes that work out their great results in the longer cycles of time. No one who observes the manner in which new specific forms are gradually introduced among those already existing, can help seeing that such new formations may have been quietly intercalated in the midst of their predecessors by a series of operations in which, as in the mighty processes by which new continents are uplifted, nothing but secondary agencies were apparent. Chemistry teaches us, as we have seen, that no new materials were required to be called into being. It is not to be supposed that certain parcels of carbon or of oxygen were created when the first living forms, containing these elements as a matter of necessity, were fashioned, inasmuch as they already existed in immeasurable abundance. What was wanted was not the materials of the

organism, or of its germ, but the force to bring them together without the intermediate action of a parent structure. The creation of matter out of nothing is perfectly credible as a fact, but not definitely conceivable by our imaginations. The combination of preëxisting elements, and the development of new properties in the resulting compound, is what we daily witness.

If the most insignificant infusorial plant or animal, having well-defined specific characters, had been evolved under our own eyes, in circumstances precluding the possible existence of a germ derived from a previous similar being, the fact would furnish us with a theory of the organic creation, so far as the purely vital, not the spiritual, side is concerned. Not having any such fact to appeal to, but, on the contrary, finding the rule that whatever lives comes from a germ absolutely universal, so far as we are acquainted with actual life, we are reduced to barren speculation as to the special mechanism employed in the many changes of programme which the paleontologist points out to us in the vegetable and animal world of the past.

"The world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony, or creation of the world" puzzles us, as it did the philosopher from whom these words are cited. By feeling our way up, through what is possible, or at least conceivable, from the laws of the inorganic world to the simplest manifestations of life, we may construct a theory of the evolution of life by means of the existing forces of nature, acting in different degree or intensity from their present ordinary mode of operation.

Let us construct such a theory, not to lean upon it, but to see what degree of plausibility it may present, or how its

weakness may drive us to another hypothesis. We will try to make the most of it, as an advocate pleads his client's cause without compromising his private opinion. Suppose the problem to be the mechanism of the introduction of vegetable life. And, first, let us illustrate our possible relations to this question by an imaginary picture of a body of philosophers of a somewhat ruder stamp than ourselves, and the statement of a question which may have occurred to them, and taxed their highest faculties.

A group of savages, living in a remote island, have from time immemorial been in the habit of employing fire for warming themselves and in cooking. They never suffer it to be extinguished everywhere at once, for they know that they can not rekindle it except from another fire. They breed it as we breed trees in our nurseries. The fact of burning is no more a mystery to them than any other natural fact; its phenomena are constant, determinable beforehand, and controllable, and, although they can not talk about carbon and oxygen as button-using sages talk, they practically know the laws of combustion. They know that fire is prolific and self-developing; that it has its little red seeds, and in due time its slender buds and broad, waving corolla, like a flower; that it loves air and hates water; that it gives pleasure or pain, according to the way of using it; that it renders the flesh of the canine race still more acceptable than their living presence, and even adds new tenderness to the paternal relation in case of premature bereavement. All this they know. But if they are asked where the first fire came from, or how it was born, they have no answer to render, or only an idle story to tell. It was the gift of the Great Spirit, or some tawny Prometheus stole it from heaven. As for any

mechanism by which it can be produced, they are entirely unable to suggest or conceive it. The wind, they know, fans a spark into a flame, but they laugh at the idea that the wind should kindle a fire without a single spark to begin with. At length a great hurricane sweeps over their island. It sways the tangled forest-branches backward and forward; it rends and twists and grinds them, until the earth is strewed with their fragments. Two dry boughs are swinging across each other, and chafing in the blast. Presently a smoke rises from their point of crossing, and then a flame—the woods are set on fire; but the great mystery is solved, and from that time forward the natives rub two sticks together when they desire to have the means of warming their fingers, or discussing the merits of such game as they may have bagged in their last skirmish.

We stand in the same relation to the origin of vegetable life as that in which the savages stood to the origin of fire before the tempest revealed it. Give us but one little vegetable spark, and we can in due time kindle it by our appliances into a flame of blossoms wreathed in a cloud of foliage. Thrust into the soil this little brown scale, one of those which the elm has dropped in thousands at our feet, and it will go on towering and spreading until it overshadows the fourth part of an acre. Take this double-winged germ, that looks so like an Egyptian amulet, and bury it. Out of its core will spring a tall shaft that will wear its greenness for a century, though scarred with many a wound, through which its sweet juices have been stolen. This persistent force, building up the elm and the maple out of such mere specks of matter, holding steadily to the specific characters of each in every diversity of soil and climate, and maintaining them

through the vicissitudes of a hundred seasons, is as great a mystery as would be the production of such a seed as either of those mentioned by deposition from the air which contains their elements, or their formation *de novo* from any collection of their proximate principles. It is only because we are not in the habit of witnessing the formation of germs as a daily occurrence, that we invest it with preternatural conditions. Geologists, who are constantly dealing with successive new creations, learn to accept the primitive evolution of an organism as a regular process, equally with its continuance. The lighting of a friction-match is not more wonderful than the conflagration of a great city which it kindles. If Schultze and Schwann had succeeded instead of failed in their experiments on equivocal generation, we should have taken the fact as quietly as the invention of lucifers.

Let us proceed with our theoretical construction. We have as much right to say that carbon has a tendency to take the form of a plant under certain circumstances, as that it has to become a diamond under other conditions. We do not see it changing directly into a plant; did we ever see it crystallizing into a diamond? Let us now consider the earth just at the period before the first evolution of vegetable life. As uncounted billions of tons of carbon have since been abstracted from the atmosphere to represent what we may call the fixed organic capital of our planet, as well as vast quantities of other elements derived from the earth and the waters, we may suppose the soil and atmosphere to have then represented a saturated solution of the elements of vegetable organisms. Some change of condition, natural but exceptional, like the hurricane in our imaginary picture—an influx of alien elements from some dis-

tant source, or an alteration of temperature, for instance—destroys the equilibrium of the solution. There takes place a vast precipitate of living crystals—needle-like, acuminated, porous, crusted with an inorganic coat of silex—the grass that covers the plains and hillsides. The organic solution having been thus reduced, the next living precipitate may probably be of a different grade, more slowly formed, more complex, a higher vegetable growth. Would this process be a whit more incomprehensible than the deposition of a cube of common salt from a clear fluid? Now, although a nucleus in the shape of a preëxisting cube of salt helps and accelerates this last process, it is not always necessary to it. So the living shape, which commonly depends for development on its preëxisting nucleus, or germ, may be conceived, under certain conditions, to be formed without it, obeying the same general forces, which are confessedly strong enough to shape and build up a mighty tree out of a mere particle of matter, or more properly from the elements to which this particle has given their first direction. After a certain number of vital precipitations, we might suppose the solution, atmospheric or other, of the organizable substances, to retain just so much of these principles as would be sufficient to keep up the integrity of the organic deposits. The cube of salt will retain its form indefinitely if kept in the fluid from which it was deposited. And thus we see a reason for the fact that every organism is immersed in a solution of its own constituents. It does not follow that we must be able to imitate this natural process by our artificial arrangements. To say nothing of our very imperfect control of the natural forces, the scale of magnitude of the experiment may entirely determine the results. Spontaneous combustion happens not un-

frequently in heaps of vegetable matter; but no experimenter will expect the same substances to take fire in such quantities as he examines by the microscope.

It is only going a step further in our supposition to conceive the first stage of vital precipitation as a simpler process. We may suppose the living precipitate to consist of what we may call *indifferent germs*, that is, assimilating and self-developing centers, determinable, but not yet determined; bearing the same relation to vegetable growths generally which the seed of an apple or pear bears to the many possible varieties that may spring from it. This hypothesis is by no means identical with that of progressive development. It supposes the existence of permanent types, but conceives each type to represent the plastic diagonal of two forces—a general organizing principle and a local determining one. The line of direction once fixed persists indefinitely, self-perpetuating, in the individual and the species, a vital movement parallel to its own axis. It is not our fault if these indifferent germs are the same things as the *semina rerum* of the old heathen Lucretius and his masters; the question is, whether they do not assist our conception of the mechanism of creation, and remove a part of its seeming difficulty.

We might apply this hypothesis of indifferent germs to that singular parallelism without identity observed in the organisms of remote regions. The resemblance between many growths of the Eastern and Western Continents, for instance, would follow as the result of the diffusion of identical germs amid similar, but not identical, general conditions of soil and climate. The same series of resemblances might be expected which we see in distant but correspond-

ing parts of the body in various affections of the skin. Both arms or both cheeks often present very nearly the same diseased aspect, the blood being the common source of the disturbing element, and certain corresponding parts on the two sides of the body furnishing the conditions for its development. So the two planetary limbs thrust through the folds of the ocean, one on either side, may be supposed to throw out their grasses, or oaks, or elms; like each other, but not the same.

"God has been pleased," says Paley, "to prescribe limits to his own power, and to work his ends within these limits." We can conceive of the introduction of vegetable life without any overstepping of the present self-prescribed limits of Divine power, as we understand them. It is not absurd to suppose that new vegetable types may be forming from time to time in the existing order of things. The vulgar belief is in favor of such occurrences. The extraordinary fact of the appearance of oaks after a pine-growth has been removed, and other occurrences of similar nature, have never been thoroughly investigated, so far as we can learn. Scientific men question curiously on the subject; there is a doubt in their minds about the acorns, if they accept the facts about the oaks, as commonly alleged. It is strange that such substantial seeds should be scattered so widely. It is stranger that such perishable matter as they hold should retain its vitality so long. The experiments on equivocal generation have been made too recently, and by men of too much judgment, to allow us to treat the doctrine with contempt. A thousand negative experiments can never settle the question definitively. We do not say that it is probable, but we can not say it is not true, that new types may be in-

tercalated every century or every year into the existing flora. If the Dix pear was created for the first time in a garden, in Washington Street, who shall say that the same power may not have just given us a new fungus in some corner of its vast nursery?

Whatever difficulties we find in attempting to frame a conception of the first evolution of *animal* life, there are certain facts which we are authorized to take as guides in our reasonings or imaginings upon the matter. Science confirms the statement of revelation, that animal life must have come into being after vegetable life. The plain reason is, that plants are necessary to prepare the food of animals. And since no existing animal organism is ever built up directly from the elements, but only out of materials derived directly or mediately from the vegetable world, we may question whether those first created were put together directly from the elements. The first animals were necessarily placed where their food was abundant. But their food contained the elements of their bodies, and why should not the proximate principles contained in the accumulations of vegetable matter about their birthplace have furnished the materials of the first, as well as of all subsequent organisms?

The primordial development of the higher animals presents this peculiar difficulty—that their germs depend for their evolution on their continued connection with the parent. We can conceive of an infusorial seed or ovum as being formed by the “concourse of atoms,” guided by that Infinite Wisdom which we see every day grouping the same atoms about their living nuclei. Reasonable men experiment with the hope of observing such a fact. But no one since Paracelsus—unless it be the mother of Frankenstein—

has thought of getting up an artificial *homunculus*, or *homo*, or even a lower mammal, or a bird. Vaucanson's duck was perhaps the nearest approach to such a performance. He could utter the monosyllable abhorred of medical men, and make himself disagreeable in more ways than it is necessary to mention. But he was nothing better than wood, and illustrates the hopeless distance between the best of our paltry toys and the universe of miracles shut up in any one of the more perfect animal organisms. So difficult has the problem of the evolution of the higher animal forms appeared to speculative philosophers, that they have invented the theory of progressive development of the superior from the lower types. The sharp lines which separate species, as shown by observation of every organic form, extinct as well as living, have caused this famous and seductive hypothesis to be very generally rejected as untenable.

With all the difficulties, however, that stand in the way of our conceiving of the evolution of a mammal by the aid of the general forces of nature acting on the organic elements, we do not see where to draw the line which shall separate the higher from the lower forms of life, and assign a different origin to the two divisions of the series. Reasoning from below upward, we should come to this frank conclusion, that, as definite form, limited duration, growth and decay, harmony of parts, transmissible qualities, all implying a controlling intelligence, are manifested in the inorganic world, we can not assume that the same forces which produce its phenomena may not show themselves through all forms of organized matter as *vital* force. And, as the conditions of action of these forces must have varied at different periods of the earth's history, we can not assume that they

have always been incompetent to bring together the elements of organized matter. The various organic forms which we observe fossilized in the strata of the earth, without any parent structures in the subjacent layers, may be considered as marking by their appearance the epoch of successive "fits of easy transmission" of the plastic elemental influence:

"Sed, quia finem aliquam pariundi debet habere,
Destitit; ut mulier, spatio defessa vetusto."

And here we leave this aspect of the question, to look at it in another point of view.

We recognize two, and only two, great divisions in created things. To the first class of his creatures the Deity sustains only active relations. All their qualities, functions, adjustments, harmonies, are immediate expressions of his wisdom and power. Every specific form is a manifestation of the Supreme thought. Every elemental movement is the Sovereign's self in action. The only question is, whether he has at one time been present in our elements with an organizing force, and afterward withdrawn this particular manifestation, or whether under the same conditions these elements would always manifest his ideas in the production of the same forms, just as they now maintain the present forms of life by a perpetual miracle, which we fail to recognize as such only because it is familiar to our daily experience. We have stated, as well as our space permitted, the argument for the presence of an organizing force in the elements around us.

To the second class of his creatures the Creator stands in passive as well as active relations. They are no longer simple instruments to do his bidding. They may disobey

him, and violate the harmonies of the universe. They have the great prerogative of self-determination, which, with knowledge of the moral relations of their acts, constitutes them responsible beings.

Now, if our previous view of matter and of elemental force as continuous Divine manifestations is correct, they could not in the nature of things become self-determining existences. The creation of independent centers of will and action involves a change in the character of the formative agencies hitherto at work in the portion of the universe with which we are acquainted. And here we come at once upon that mystery of mysteries: How and when are these spiritual natures called into being, and what is their relation to the material frames whose fundamental vital action we have alone considered? Have they existed in some former state, as Plato taught in the Academy, and Dr. Edward Beecher has maintained in the Church? Are the shores of embryonic life crowded with souls waiting for their bodies, as Lucretius tells his readers was the foolish fable, and as Brigham Young reveals to his congregation and announces in his harem? Or can it be that Tennyson has solved the difficulty when he tells us that—

“ . . . star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast,
And strike his being into bounds,

“ And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think ”?

Or does the soul organize its own body, as thoughtful men have held, from Aristotle to Mr. Garth Wilkinson?

Into these and similar questions we can not now enter,

if under any circumstances we should be willing to cast a line into such fathomless abysses of speculation. But as we have followed the physical view of life upward until we have reached an impassable limit, it is but fair to indicate briefly the reversed aspect of living nature, when viewed from above downward, by taking, as the point of departure, its spiritual apex, instead of its material base.

The introduction of self-determining existence, or sub-creative centers, into the order of things, marks, as we have said, the great change of action by which Omnipotence saw fit to assume passive, as well as active, relations to its creatures. There is nothing in light or heat, or electricity, or chemical or mechanical force, that can give any account of spiritual existence. When the first human soul was introduced to earthly being, if not before the date of this last birth of creation, there was a new force put forth which was not any of these. And so, whenever a new soul takes mortal shape, we recognize it as an emanation from its Maker by some other channel than through the elemental substances or influences that wait upon its secondary and simply organic necessities.

We could not think it strange that, at the period of this spiritual evolution, a force running parallel with it in the material world—a force not identical with any of the ordinary physical agencies—should combine the elements of the bodily form, and shape it to the wants of the immaterial principle. We should not therefore be constrained to throw upon the common forces of nature that wonderful development from simple to complex, from general to special, which carries a translucent vesicle through a series of evolutions and differentiations, until it wears the shape of the august

being to whom the Deity has delegated a portion of his omnipotence. But this conclusion would oblige us to argue backward from it to the lower animals, whose material frames and organic existence are essentially identical in their composition and mode of being with our own. And, conceding that a special change of character in the forces of nature marks the appearance of animal life, there would be strong reason for extending the same supposition to the vegetable kingdom. This is only one instance of the difference between our conclusions when we look from the higher sphere and those which we naturally accept from the workshops of material philosophy. We must be content to remain in doubt on many details of creation not revealed to us, on which we can only shape a few half-shadowed hypotheses.

In conclusion, we recognize our spiritual natures as having only incidental and temporary relations with the material substance and general forces of the universe. But we may concede that, the further our examination extends, the more completely the organic or simply vital forces appear to resolve themselves into manifestations of those closely related or mutually convertible principles which give activity to the unconscious portion of the universe. We have no experimental evidence that these physical agencies can form any living germ by their action upon matter; nor can we prove the contrary. The only directly observed conditions of the evolution of a living structure involve the presence of a germ derived from a being of similar characters. But observation of the earth's strata shows that new forms of life have appeared at numerous successive periods by some other creative mechanism. We can frame hypotheses not inconsistent with the ordinary laws of matter to account

for such formations, but they can be regarded only as more or less ingenious speculations. We are obliged to recognize a special intervention of creative power in the introduction of spiritual existence in the midst of the preëxisting unconscious creation. If we allow that higher modes of action have once been superinduced upon the ordinary physical forces, we can not deny the possibility, and even probability, of repeated changes in the working machinery of creation, coinciding with the evolution of each new type of organization. And if new formulæ of force in combination with matter preceded the creation of each organism, or group of organisms, we can understand that a special *vital* formula may be involved in the continuance of their existence. Thus accepting the fact of a change of law as a possible part of the constitution of the universe, we arrive, independently of revelation, at the doctrine of miracles, as this term is commonly understood. But in the view we have taken, whatever part may be assigned to the physical forces in the production and phenomena of life, all being is not the less one perpetual miracle, in which the Infinite Creator, acting through what we often call secondary causes, is himself the moving principle of the universe he first framed and never ceases to sustain.

THE END.

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